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EQUITY, MOTIVATION, AND LEADERSHIP: A MATTER OF JUSTICE

*Patsy E. Johnson**

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1936 Harold Lasswell published *Politics: Who Gets What, When, and How*.¹ Today, Arkansas is dealing with these issues as it struggles to structure and fund its public education system. Given the recent consolidation of small school systems, *Where* could be added to the list. These issues have become questions as the legislative, executive, and judicial branches have engaged the conflicts and controversies associated with equitable and fair distributions of the educational pie. Perceptions of fairness or justice depend on answering these questions in terms to the extent that individuals or groups experience opportunity or disadvantage. The answers are products of distributing goods and services, wealth or the expectation for acquiring it, and general well being because of health and safety. Justice in education, however, is not attained by merely distributing financial resources fairly; these resources must be tied to providing appropriate school environments in which students and teachers are motivated to give their best efforts and to developing school leaders who service the principles of organizational justice.

Shaping a public policy for school funding presents a dilemma because self-interest and public interest work against each other. Maintaining a public school system is in the public interest. The social benefit of a high quality public school system comes at the cost of private sacrifices through a system of individual tax payments.² To view the problem from the reverse perspective, the individual benefit of high private consumption comes at the cost of providing a poor public school system.³ The problem that Arkansas and other states encounter in funding public education is getting legislators and the individuals they represent to sacrifice individual benefits and advantages to obtain some collective benefit or advantage. In this case, the benefit is to meet constitutional mandates identified by the courts for educating the school children in Arkansas.

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1. HAROLD D. LASWELL, *POLITICS: WHO GETS WHAT, WHEN, AND HOW* (1936).

2. DEBORAH STONE, *POLICY PARADOX: THE ART OF POLITICAL DECISION MAKING* 22 (rev. ed. 2002).

3. *Id.*

II. VERSIONS OF FAIRNESS

To understand the conflicts and controversies that emerge from competing versions of fairness, I have placed the *Who, What, When, How* in a variety of versions of what constitutes fair distributions. These versions draw upon Deborah Stone's metaphorical piece-of-the-pie approach to distribution that she clearly delineates in her book *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*.⁴

First, the fundamental premise for fair distribution of political resources is that everyone will benefit equally.⁵ This premise, however, is open to interpretation. One such interpretation is that everyone benefits equally if each student in the state is allocated the same amount of educational funds. The funding formula is simple—merely divide the total dollars spent on education by the total number of students and distribute the funds to each school district according to its total enrollment. In other words, everyone gets an equal slice of the educational pie based on the assumption that all students are equal, all school districts are equal, and all spending produces equal educational effects among all students and all schools. Challenges to such assumptions have fueled the school funding fairness debate.

Courts in various states have interpreted fairness in school finance as spending the same on each pupil regardless of district property wealth.⁶ Forty-nine states have published "spending gaps" between rich and poor school districts as the primary indicators of unfair state funding systems.⁷ Such gaps have become substantive issues in court invalidations of state educational systems.⁸ The basis for the invalidations was the claim that dramatic inequalities in spending per pupil meant that students from poorer school districts were being denied equal educational opportunities because of unequal access to educational resources.⁹

Added to the court mandated gap-closing remedies is the contention that equal portions for all is unfair because all students are not equal due to discrepancies in need.¹⁰ These discrepancies are not only reflected in the economic divide existing between the poorest, weakest, and most vulnerable people and the richest, strongest, and most protected people, but also in the

4. *Id.*

5. JOHN RAWLS, *POLITICAL LIBERALISM* 5–6 (1993).

6. UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE, *SCHOOL FINANCE: STATE EFFORTS TO REDUCE FUNDING GAPS BETWEEN POOR AND WEALTHY DISTRICTS* 5 (1997). Such states include Alabama, Ohio, and Wyoming. *Id.*

7. *Id.* at 75.

8. *Id.*

9. *Id.*

10. *Id.*

vast array of educational challenges presented by a diverse population.¹¹ A partial listing of challenges includes students who are mentally retarded, intellectually gifted, physically handicapped, and emotionally conflicted. Also included in this group, as well as many others, are students who speak English as a second language, who have poor physical and mental health and nutrition, and who receive little or no support from home for negotiating the school's academic and social requirements.¹² These challenges result in a differentiated call for educational resources such as teachers, equipment, materials, programs, and space.¹³ Therefore, equal spending per pupil will not achieve fairness because some students require more resources than others in order to obtain similar achievement. The formula for fairness, then, is achieved by slicing the educational pie into unequal slices with the largest pieces going to those with the most need.

Another objection to equal portions comes from the observation that all school districts are not equal.¹⁴ Even if mandates emerge dictating that the pupil-teacher ratio, teaching skills, administrative competence, decisions about curricula, the condition of the physical plant, community traditions, and standards for education create considerable variation from one school to the next, the reality is that pupil-teacher ratios vary considerably from one school district to another.¹⁵ Also, some school districts pay higher salaries for fewer teachers to attract more effective teachers while other districts pay teachers lower salaries to pay more for materials, supplies, and other operating expenses.¹⁶ Still other districts may invest more in administrative positions and costs and less in instruction. These school districts argue that they are making decisions regarding the use of funds that best serve its constituencies. The formula for fairness, then, is equal slices of the educational pie for each student with unequal spending criteria.

A fourth conception of fairness rests on the American economic and moral psyche that values productivity as an important principle of distribution.¹⁷ School districts that have accumulated the most wealth are populated by citizens who have been the most productive in generating capital resources.¹⁸ These same citizens also tend to pay more in taxes per capita than

11. *Id.*

12. UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE, *supra* note 6, at 75.

13. *Id.*

14. *Id.*

15. 2002-2003 Rankings of Arkansas School Districts, available at <http://www.as-is.org/general.php>

16. Karen Hawley Miles, *Matching Spending with Strategy: Aligning District Spending to Support and Strategy of Comprehensive School Reform* 3-4, available at www.naschools.org/uploaded/files/matching.pdf. (last visited Aug. 13, 2004).

17. STONE, *supra* note 2, at 43-44.

18. Miles, *supra* note 16.

those citizens with more modest economic resources.¹⁹ The more affluent school districts have historically spent more per pupil on education than the poorer school districts.²⁰ This disparity is justified by the "haves" as a right going to those whose lifetime of acquired skills puts them in a position of higher remuneration.²¹ In other words, they should be able spend more on their schools than the "havenots" in order to purchase those educational benefits that will assure that their children retain their advantage. The formula for fairness, then, is that the size of the piece of the educational pie depends on the economic productivity of the school's constituents.

A fifth conception of fairness depends on the notion of reasonable proportionality.²² This concept attempts to determine the appropriate ratio between an economic floor sufficient to provide for basic human needs and an economic ceiling that reflects an ethic of what is "enough." The imbalance in American society is reflected in the staggering disparity between the rich and the poor.²³ The richest 2.8 million Americans, comprising the top one percent of the population, have more after-tax dollars to spend than the poorest 110 million Americans combined, and they possess forty percent of the nation's wealth.²⁴ Included in this one percent are chief executives of corporations who earn an average in excess of \$12 million annually and sports figures whose playing time is measured in tens of thousands of dollars per hour.²⁵ At the lower end are janitors earning less than \$16,000 annually and more than two million nursing home workers earning between \$8 and \$10 per hour.²⁶ Taxing efforts to redistribute the wealth have been subject to the political strength of those being taxed.²⁷ These examples of extreme inequality challenge the sense of fairness inherent in the economic expectations for citizens in a democracy.²⁸ The formula for fairness is that people with more financial resources may get larger slices of the educational pie—but only up to a point.

These examples of fairness concepts reveal why it has been difficult to devise an agreeable system for *who* gets *what*, *when*, and *how*. It would seem that when justice issues in school funding are limited to these political

19. UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE, SCHOOL FINANCE: STATE EFFORTS TO REDUCE FUNDING GAPS BETWEEN POOR AND WEALTHY DISTRICTS 53-54 (1997).

20. *Id.*

21. STONE, *supra* note 2, at 43-44.

22. *Id.*

23. Lynnley Browning, *U.S. Income Gap Widening, Study Says*; N.Y. TIMES, Sept. 25, 2003, at C2.

24. *Id.*

25. *Id.*

26. *Id.*

27. Sheila Murray *et al.*, *Education-Finance Reform and the Distribution of Education Resources*, 88 AM. ECON. REV. 789, 800 (1988).

28. STONE, *supra* note 2, at 57.

considerations, no matter what orders emerge from the courts, what funding acts are adopted by the legislature, and what administrative plans are adopted by the state department of education, some citizens in Arkansas will feel the way public schools are funded and operated is unfair.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL AND MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS

The plans discussed to this point are, at best, likely to provide only modest improvement in the educational result for the children of Arkansas and, at worst, will fail to provide desired gains while additionally burdening taxpayers (a scenario to be avoided by the political and educational establishments). To understand what is missing from the discussion, I turn to Frederick Herzberg's insightful contributions to human relations and motivation theory and apply them to the public education problem.²⁹ His theory is composed of two factors: (1) the hygiene factor that includes the educational environment and (2) the motivation factor that involves what people actually do in the school.³⁰ Hygiene and motivation, according to Herzberg, are the key factors that influence human performance.³¹

The hygiene factor, or environmental factor, includes the following elements: (1) physical surroundings (school building and facilities); (2) supervision teachers receive from the school leaders; (3) salaries for teachers; (4) instruction students receive from the teachers; (5) working conditions for teachers; (6) learning conditions for students; (7) status; (8) security; (9) interpersonal relations; and (10) the school organization itself.

These elements do not lead directly to higher levels of motivation for teaching excellence or academic effort, but without them there is justifiable dissatisfaction. Most of these features of schooling are issues in the funding concerns raised by the court order of then-Chancellor Kilgore.³² When teachers and students are dissatisfied with the environmental elements, including the features that money can buy, they are not motivated to partake of and contribute to the organization.³³ Clearly, all constituents of the school organization have been dissatisfied with the environmental factor in schools where funding has been insufficient to provide for each of these elements.

The second part of Herzberg's theory concerns what people actually do as members of the school organization.³⁴ Whether or not they pursue the intent of the organization to positive ends is determined by their internal performance generators to act for their individual self interests and the col-

29. FREDERICK HERZBERG ET AL., *THE MOTIVATION TO WORK* 1(2d ed. 1959).

30. *Id.* at 45, 47.

31. *Id.*

32. *Lake View Sch. Dist. No. 25 v. Huckabee*, No. 92-5318 (Ark. Ch. 2001).

33. HERZBERG, *supra* note 29.

34. *Id.*

lective interests of the group.³⁵ These generators are stimulated by the following such motivators: (1) achievement, (2) recognition, (3) intellectual and personal growth to higher tasks and thinking, (4) interest in learning, (5) interest in teaching, and (6) increased responsibility for learning.

For an effective school organization, both environmental and motivational factors must be in place simultaneously. It is equally important to provide the best circumstances for the constituents of our school systems to achieve the minimum of dissatisfaction and at the same time utilize each individual's talents, interests, and capabilities to maximize motivation to succeed in school. The courts, legislature, and governor appear to be working to provide a learning environment that is fair for all students. However, the expected results in improved education will not be realized if the assumption stands that merely providing equal and appropriate environments or resources will allow students to realize the state's education goals. We must also start the motivation generators in our school personnel and students. It appears that the discussion for this has not yet been joined. I propose that the key to the switch for energy and action in education is found in the principles of organizational justice and the skills and behaviors of the school leaders.

Leadership accountability has rested on the assumption that the personal characteristics of the school leader, the principal, impacts students' education.³⁶ Leadership accountability, therefore, has been based indirectly on outcomes such as student and teacher performance. I propose, however, that a more direct connection to leader accountability can be formed by creating a just and fair learning organization.

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE AND THE SCHOOL LEADER

The school organization is generally recognized as an important part of the learning process in which the leader has considerable control.³⁷ An important perspective of the school organization is organizational justice,³⁸ which can be conceptualized as "fair or unfair."³⁹ Organizational justice has been defined as follows: (1) conceptions of what ought to be, (2) actions

35. *Id.*

36. Patsy E. Johnson & Jennifer Payne Evans, *Power, Communicator Styles, and Conflict Management Styles: A Web of Interpersonal Constructs for the School Principal*, 6 INT'L J. EDUC. REFORM 40 (1997).

37. SCHOOL CLIMATE: MEASURING, IMPROVING, AND SUSTAINING HEALTHY LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS (H. Jerome Freiburg ed., 1999).

38. Jerald Greenberg, *A Taxonomy of Organizational Justice Theories*, 12 ACAD. MGMT. REV. 1, 9 (1987).

39. RUSSELL CROPANZANO & JERALD GREENBERG, *Progress in Organizational Justice: Tunneling Through the Maze*, in INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF INDUSTRIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY 317-72 (Carl L. Cooper & Ivan T. Robertson eds., 1997).

that correspond to standards, (3) outcomes that match entitlements, and (4) value that the organization places on the individual.⁴⁰ It is also included in the underlying values, beliefs, and attitudes that define the style of interaction between students, teachers, and administrators. Justice could be considered as regarding human beings as equal. In schools, justice includes the belief that all children deserve a decent life and to have basic needs met such as safety, respect, a sense of belonging (in response to hostile and unfriendly environments), and fair treatment.

A. The Just and Unjust School Organization

Organizational justice is a function of the conduct of the organization. The three base components of organizational conduct which correspond to the three base components of organizational justice are distributions, procedures, and personal interactions.⁴¹ Distributive justice involves perceptions of fairness regarding how resources are distributed.⁴² Procedural justice involves the rules and the processes of the organization.⁴³ Interactional justice involves the personal exchanges between people.⁴⁴ Each component involves perceptions of fairness. Although each dimension has considerable interdependence with the other two in producing perceptions of fairness, each can be considered separately in general terms.

Distributive justice involves the allotment of material and socio-psychological resources.⁴⁵ Material resources for teachers include salaries and budget support for instructional needs. Material resources for students include grades and placement into competitively selected classes. Social-psychological resources for teachers include control and use of information, evaluation of teaching effectiveness, recognition for meritorious performance, and mentoring functions that may lead to career advancement or improved teaching evaluations. Social psychological resources for students include recognition of accomplishments or some quality that distinguishes one from the referent group and attention and value from teachers. School can be problematic for teachers and students who are unfairly limited in receiving these distributions.

40. Robert Folger & Russell Cropanzano, *Fairness Theory: Justice as Accountability in* ADVANCES IN ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE 1-55 (Jerald Greenberg & Russell Cropanzano eds., 2001).

41. CROPANZANO & GREENBERG, *supra* note 39, at 317-72.

42. Gerald S. Leventhal, *The Distribution of Rewards and Resources in Groups and Organizations*, in ADVANCES IN EXPERIMENTAL SOCIAL PSYCHOL. 91-131 (1976).

43. JOHN THIBAUT & LAUREN WALKER, PROCEDURAL JUSTICE: A PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS 67 (1975).

44. Robert J. Bies & Joseph S. Moag, *Interactional Justice: Communication Criteria of Fairness*, 1 RES. NEGOTIATION ORG. 43-55 (1986).

45. CROPANZANO & GREENBERG, *supra* note 39, at 317-72.

Procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of the procedures used to determine outcomes.⁴⁶ The actions to be applied in the decision can be either predictable, based on established procedures for a given scenario, or unpredictable, because of arbitrary and discretionary powers of those in authority. Predictability comes from rules, contracts, protocols, routines, traditions, and customs. In the absence of such organizers, actions must be determined ad hoc, which may or may not become a precedent. Predictable or arbitrary actions are neither just or unjust merely because of these qualities. Established rules that have no flexibility because of the context of the situation can be unjust. Judgments of the fairness of an outcome of the procedures are upheld when the following criteria are obtained: (1) those affected have been able to give input during the proceedings, (2) those affected have been able to influence the outcome of the procedures, (3) the procedures have been applied consistently, (4) the procedures have been free from bias, (5) the procedures have been based on accurate information, (6) the outcome of the procedures can be appealed, and (7) the procedures are upheld by moral and ethical standards.⁴⁷

Interactional justice involves the interpersonal treatment or mistreatment that individuals receive when authorities enact procedures to distribute benefits and results of the organization.⁴⁸ This interpersonal treatment can be considered as having two dimensions—explanations and sensitivity.⁴⁹ Behavioral categories under explanations include justification and honesty.⁵⁰ Justification involves explaining the reasons for making a decision, and honesty means that the decision maker is forthright in giving accurate information about the reasons for the decision and its consequences.⁵¹ Related to this are derogatory judgments that give rise to concerns of truthfulness, accuracy, and completeness of information upon which the judgments are based.⁵² Behavioral categories under sensitivity include respect and pro-

46. Russell Cropanzano & Maureen L. Ambrose, *Procedural and Distributive Justice are More Similar than You Think: A Monistic Perspective and a Research Agenda*, in ADVANCES IN ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE 119, 123 (Jerald Greenberg & Russell Cropanzano eds., 2001).

47. LEVENTHAL, *supra* note 42, at 91–131.

48. Robert J. Bies, *Interactional (In)justice: The Sacred and the Profane*, in ADVANCES IN ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE 98–118 (Jerald Greenberg & Russell Cropanzano eds., 2001).

49. Jerald Greenberg, *The Social Side of Fairness: Interpersonal and Informational Classes of Organizational Justice*, in JUSTICE IN THE WORKPLACE: APPROACHING FAIRNESS IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT 79–103 (Russell Cropanzano ed., 1993); Tom Tyler & Robert J. Bies, *Beyond Formal Procedures: The Interpersonal Context of Procedural Justice*, in APPLIED SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND ORGANIZATIONAL SETTINGS 77–98 (John S. Carroll ed., 1990).

50. CROPANZANO & GREENBERG, *supra* note 39, at 317–72; Bies & Moag, *supra* note 44, at 43–45.

51. Bies & Moag, *supra* note 44, at 43–45.

52. *Id.*

priety.⁵³ Respect refers to giving value to an individual's feelings by being polite, sincere, friendly, supporting and recognizing an individual's personal needs, and empathizing with a person's difficulties.⁵⁴ Propriety means being kind with the truth and thoughtful about remarks that might be culturally insensitive or prejudicial.⁵⁵

B. The Impact of Unfair Learning Environments

Distributive, procedural, and interactional injustice creates unfair learning environments. No matter what funding levels and distribution systems the state enacts, unfair learning environments can have negative effects on student performance.⁵⁶ In an unfair environment, students experience powerlessness when they cannot control or change aspects of the school organization or how they are treated as members of that organization. When students cannot change the policies and practices imposed by the school's leadership that cause them injury, students may choose not to compete for rewards (e.g., praise and academic grades), become truant, rebel against rules, or refuse to participate. Injustice breeds feelings of hopelessness, and despair fills the void left when justice and care are absent from the school environment.

Fairness judgments regarding distributions are based on the notion that individuals join organizations with the expectation that benefits will accrue.⁵⁷ Constructs emerge in individuals' minds to hold the organization accountable for fair delivery of those benefits.⁵⁸ This means that there should be a reconciliation between what an individual receives as outcomes from the organization compared to what the individual believes to be the organization's role in distributing those benefits or outcomes.⁵⁹ These constructs are called equality, need, and equity.⁶⁰ Equality refers to distributing the benefits equally among all members in the organization or providing an equal opportunity to receive the benefits.⁶¹ Need refers to distributing the benefits based on relieving some deficit condition.⁶² Equity refers to distributing the benefits based on an individual's relative contribution to the or-

53. *Id.*

54. *Id.*

55. *Id.*

56. Reece L. Petersen & Russell Skiba, *Creating School Climates that Prevent School Violence*, 44 PREVENTING SCH. FAILURE 122, 122-30 (2000).

57. Cropanzano & Ambrose, *supra* note 46, at 119-51.

58. MORTON DEUTSCH, DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE 31-45 (1985).

59. *Id.*

60. *Id.*

61. *Id.*

62. *Id.*

ganization.⁶³ In each of these constructs, concerns of justice occur only with a negative perception of fairness.⁶⁴ In other words, an individual is not concerned with justice unless that individual perceives some material or psychological injury in terms of inequality, need, or inequity. Along with such perceptions are beliefs that the procedures used to determine the organization's benefits are also unfair.⁶⁵

Organizational procedures that are fair rely on precisely stated procedures to provide the participants with a measure of predictability.⁶⁶ A perfect procedure would find a balance between what is explicitly stated as a procedure and what is a judgment call that relies on individual expertise and wisdom applied in the context of each situation. There is a balance between concerns of consistency when distributing benefits (or sanctions) and concerns for making allowances for special situations and individual circumstances that were not considered when drafting the explicit procedures or rules. This balance includes the need for individuals to believe that they are not disadvantaged from the biases of the authorities, but also that they can benefit from creative responses to unforeseen events.⁶⁷ Any rule is bound to be flawed because it cannot specify every detail of every situation to which the rule might apply. However, the association of perceptions of injustice with organizational procedures comes from a realization that there is no such thing as a perfect procedure.⁶⁸ In reality, any rule or procedure produces relative advantages for some and relative disadvantages for others depending on individual circumstances.⁶⁹ Therefore, there are no perfect procedures, and imperfect procedures produce imperfect justice.

The impact of imperfect procedures can be lessened to some extent when those affected by the decisions have a voice in developing the procedures.⁷⁰ The claim of being unfairly disadvantaged from a decision is muted when individuals recognize their own contribution to the outcome.⁷¹ This realization only emerges when the participants feel that their input was genuinely considered.⁷²

Interactions that attack one's sense of fairness include bullying (either physically or verbally), manipulating, using another as a means to achieve some external purpose, having a stern and arrogant manner, threatening an

63. *Id.*

64. DEUTSCH, *supra* note 58, at 31-45.

65. *Id.*

66. Leventhal, *supra* note 42, at 91-131.

67. *Id.*

68. Cropanzano & Ambrose, *supra* note 46, at 119-51.

69. STONE, *supra* note 2, at 295.

70. BLAIR H. SHEPPARD ET AL., ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE: THE SEARCH FOR FAIRNESS IN THE WORKPLACE 139-63 (1992).

71. *Id.*

72. *Id.*

individual's dignity or self-image, blaming one's mistakes on another, being deceptive or hostile, withholding attention, and ignoring the presence or actions of others.⁷³ These attacks strike our sense of self, on which each of us places a high value. The sense of injustice arising from these interpersonal mistreatments can be very intense. Additionally, injustice derived from mistreatment can affect perceptions of injustice emerging from distributions and procedures. Taken from a positive perspective, perceptions of injustice from distributions and procedures can be softened through interpersonal treatment that dignifies rather than derogates.

C. The Accountable Organization

The appraisal of organizational conduct proceeds in the following two interactive dimensions: (1) the valence of the action, some standard by which the conduct is judged, and (2) agency, the perceived linkage of the conduct to the organization or to an individual.⁷⁴ The valence for justice is the standard for fairness. Three judgments about conditions must be present for this standard to be relevant: "(a) an injurious condition or state of affairs (circumstances considered disadvantageous), (b) attributable to someone's [or some group's] discretionary conduct that (c) violates an applicable moral tenet."⁷⁵ All three judgments must be linked for an injustice to occur. The injury would stem from appraisal of conduct related to distributions, procedures, or interactions that places an individual or group at a perceived disadvantage in normative comparisons. Such perceptions have been shown to engender anger and resentment toward the organization and its representatives.⁷⁶

When students fail, the behaviors of the school organization are typically not examined or held accountable for their contribution to poor student performance. In Arkansas, as well as in many other states, equitable school financing is being closely scrutinized as the accountable source.⁷⁷ When school organizations are changed or reformed by altering the nature and means of financial support, however, the changes often focus on curriculum,

73. Robert J. Bies & Thomas M. Tripp, *Beyond Distrust: "Getting Even" and the Need for Revenge*, in *TRUST IN ORGANIZATIONS* 246, 246–60 (Roderick M. Kramer & Tom R. Tyler eds., 1996).

74. C. R. Snyder & Raymond L. Higgins, *Reality Negotiation and Excuse Making*, in *THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TACTICAL COMMUNICATION* 207, 207–28 (Michael J. Cody & Margaret L. McLaughlin eds., 1990).

75. Folger & Cropanzano, *supra* note 40, at 3.

76. Russell Cropanzano & Robert Folger, *Referent Cognitions and Task Decision Autonomy: Beyond Equity Theory*, 74 *J. OF APPLIED PSYCHOL.* 293, 293–99; Greenberg, *supra* note 38, at 9–22; E. ALLEN LIND & TOM R. TYLER, *THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF PROCEDURAL JUSTICE* 76 (1988).

77. Miles, *supra* note 16, at 3–4.

scheduling, re-grouping of students, or changes in personnel. It should be realized that poor student performance, antisocial behavior, and disaffection with education may be rooted in the school's procedures and processes, the distribution of resources within the school, and the personal interactions between educators and students. However, these root causes usually are not considered when dealing with student problems. One approach has been to do something to the student rather than to the organization.⁷⁸

The conditions that contribute to negative perceptions of fairness in schools are found in the relationship of "the way things are supposed to be" to "the way things are."⁷⁹ Individuals, however, vary in their perceptions of these relationships. Given a specific situation and the same set of facts, one person may perceive a large gap in this relationship whereas another person may see an acceptable alignment.⁸⁰ The importance one gives to the gap between "the way things are" and "the way things are supposed to be" likely results in the intensity of one's feelings of injustice.⁸¹ A greater gap, or a smaller tolerance for misalignment between the ideal and the real, will increase the intensity of the perceived injustice.⁸² The greater the intensity of such perceptions, the greater the consequences for student achievement.

D. Organization Conduct That Harms

A review of the organizational justice literature revealed the following five characteristics of organizational conduct that tend to harm the organization's members: (1) the existence of organizational ideologies that promote the unfair treatment of members; (2) the enactment of taken-for-granted rites and routines that reflect those ideologies; (3) the use of language that reinforces the unfair treatment of members; (4) the use of rationalizations that prevent those who participate from understanding those they violated as victims and themselves as victimizers; and (5) the use of codes of silence that are designed to protect those who participate in abuses.⁸³

Three logical conclusions follow: (1) these characteristics are found in the school organization where perceptions of organizational injustice are

78. For example, acts of violence are punished without looking for their antecedents in the interactions, procedures, and distributions of the school organization. See Alex Molnar, *Too Many Kids are Getting Killed*, 50 EDUC. LEADERSHIP 4, 4-5 (1992), available at http://www.ascd.org/publications/ed_lead/199209/molnar.html (last visited Aug. 14, 2004).

79. SHEPPARD, *supra* note 70, at 89-96.

80. *Id.*

81. *Id.*

82. *Id.*

83. Paula Caproni & Jocelyn A. Finley, *When Organizations Do Harm: Two Cautionary Tales*, in MANAGING THE ORGANIZATIONAL MELTING POT: DILEMMAS OF WORKPLACE DIVERSITY 256 (1997).

found; (2) the presence of these characteristics is related to perceptions of injustice and to negative outcomes of schooling; and (3) the students' perceptions of organizational justice are linked to the behaviors, practices, and beliefs of teachers and administrators.

E. A Framework for Addressing Persistent Leadership Problems

These conclusions directly touch on the academic, motivational, attitudinal, and behavioral problems facing most school leaders. These are problems found in all schools at all socio-economic levels.⁸⁴ The violent incident at Columbine High School, for example, demonstrated that even schools with so-called advantaged populations have deep-seated problems that are related to how people interact with each other and to perceptions of fairness. This is a dramatic and tragic example of how experiences with injustice (in this case, resulting from alienation and bullying) are powerful motivators to engage in violence and self-destruction. Although with this and other tragic incidents, the issue of injustice has been recognized as an antecedent to the violence. Virtually no mention of the school organization as an active contributor to the injustice has emerged, nor has leader accountability been offered as a means to address this contribution.

The theoretical underpinnings of organizational justice paired with the operational characteristics of most schools offer a compelling framework for explaining why the multiple problems with student performance have been resistant to treatment and how to focus on the school organization's needs to address fairness for all participants. This approach extends the fairness considerations well beyond the issues of school finance currently being considered in Arkansas. Accessing the knowledge base of organizational justice for school leadership offers the promise of breaking a cycle of failures in schools. The causes have been unrecognized and ignored. Failure to act maintains the status quo regarding the organization's role in contributing to injustice, which is to ignore promising solutions to difficult problems in our schools. These problems are and have been the reason that school reform efforts are underway in Arkansas and elsewhere.⁸⁵

84. Karen L. Tonso, *Reflecting on Columbine High: Ideologies of Privilege in "Standardized" Schools*, 33 EDUC. STUD.: J. AM. EDUC. STUD. ASS'N 389, 389-403 (2002).

85. For a discussion of these issues, see The National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform, *What is Comprehensive School Reform?*, at www.goodschools.gwu.edu/about_csr/index.html (last visited Nov. 4, 2004).

F. Social Relations in Leadership

Social relations are important to perceptions of organizational justice.⁸⁶ The most important social relationship is between those in authority and those who must comply with or who are affected by the decisions of those in authority. This relationship is defined by differences in power. Those in authority have the power to make decisions for the organization and to change the organization. Also, those in authority have the opportunity to adversely affect their subordinates' welfare. Therefore, those in authority are most likely to be responsible for perceptions of organizational justice.

The principal of a school is the dominant authority. How a principal derives power and treats subordinates is the fundamental social relationship in a school affecting perceptions of fairness. Principals who exercise authority from a position of personal trust, rather than mistrust, given by the subordinates are more likely to have their decisions viewed as fair. For example, consider principals who operate from a weak power base because most teachers see them as having limited expertise in curriculum, teaching, and managing the school's operational needs. When they evaluate teaching performance and include these evaluations in the teachers' personnel files, the teachers do not trust the validity of the leaders' observations, and the teachers consider any negative criticism to be unfair because of the principals' perceived low level of expertise.⁸⁷ The teachers must view their own treatment, as well as the treatment of others, as fair or unfair when compared to standards of justice that have been observed when the leaders were operating from a base of high expertise. The small group of teachers who support their evaluations do so because the principals have established a power relationship with them based on strong interpersonal connections.⁸⁸

G. Leadership Accountability

A knowledge base that considers that the school leader is leading a school organization presents a structure for directly observing the results of leadership, which are the behaviors and products of the school organization.⁸⁹ The components of organizational justice—distributions, procedures, and personal interactions—can be measured directly and can be related to leadership behaviors and decisions for the school.⁹⁰ This overarching con-

86. Tyler & Bies, *supra* note 49, at 81–88.

87. Johnson & Evans, *supra* note 36, at 40–53.

88. *Id.*

89. For a discussion of leader accountability in organizations, see Folger & Cropanzano, *supra* note 40, at 1–55.

90. Janice M. Paterson et al., *The Measurement of Organizational Justice in Organizational Change Programmes: A Reliability, Validity and Context-Sensitivity Assessment*, in 75

struct has the potential to unify and bring into focus the various attempts to define what it means to be an educational leader. Such a result would bring accountability to a profession that, until now, has been elusive. A re-cultured profession that includes moral stewards, educators, and community builders defines the qualities of the individual school leader.⁹¹ A focused profession that views distributive, procedural, and interactional justice as its knowledge base has promise for re-culturing the learning environment of the school organization. It is the organization that is the ultimate conveyor of democracy and the ultimate steward of educational funds.

V. EQUITY, MOTIVATION, AND LEADERSHIP IN ARKANSAS SCHOOL REFORM EFFORTS

The preceding discussion illustrates that justice in education is not attained by merely distributing financial resources fairly. Educational resources must be tied to providing appropriate school environments in which students and teachers are motivated to give their best efforts and to develop school leaders who service the principles of organizational justice. Arkansas, or any state struggling to reallocate educational expenditures to equalize opportunities, has the challenge of moving beyond the expectation that merely finding an appropriate solution to distributing educational funds will assure that all of its students are served fairly. Although it is important to continue reform efforts that will adequately fund facilities, personnel, and curricula, it is also important to make provisions for security, status, and positive interpersonal relations. It is imperative that funding efforts be tied to building the motivators that activate imagination, initiative, and intensity in teaching and learning. In addition, school financing decisions should include assurances that school organizations are led by individuals who recognize the importance of fairness to students and teachers as they function in the educational organization. These leaders should head organizations that are mindful of the impact of their procedures, distribution of resources, and personal interactions on learning and teaching. They should be held accountable for organizational conduct that leads to student and teaching failures. The linkages between funding, school environment, and justice will greatly enhance any school reform effort.

J. OCCUPATIONAL ORG. PSYCHOL. 393, 393-408 (2002).

91. Joseph Murphy, *Reculturing the Profession Of Educational Leadership: New Blueprints*, in THE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE: REDEFINING LEADERSHIP FOR THE 21ST CENTURY (Joseph Murphy ed., 2002).

