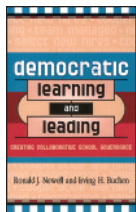


# Democratic Learning and Leading

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Shared governance as a topic for educational texts has been around for at least two decades in one form or another. What makes *Democratic Learning and Leading: Creating Collaborative School Governance* by Ronald J. Newell and Irving H. Buchen different is its focus on democratic schools through the Ed Visions Cooperative.

Rather than being an objective review of organizational practices that lead to the formation of democratic schools, Newell and Buchen's book could have devolved into an advertisement for Ed Visions Cooperative. In existence since 1994, Ed Visions is a cooperative model involving teachers and other educators focused on developing small efficient educational systems in their communities.

The premise of Ed Visions revolves around two core elements: student-centered, project-based learning and teacher cooperatives. Newell and Buchen advocate this approach. By eliminating administrators, school boards could contract with teacher cooperatives. The argument for this is that more money would be funneled into direct instruction and the layers of bureaucracy between the classroom and the board would be removed, allowing major decisions to be made more easily.

The authors make some sweeping assumptions—first, that teachers would be willing to take leadership roles in personnel and other key areas; second, that teachers would want to take on responsibilities beyond their classrooms; and third, that teachers have received professional development in administration.

(*Democratic Learning and Leading: Creating Collaborative School Governance* by Ronald J. Newell and Irving H. Buchen, Rowman and Littlefield Education, Lanham, Md., 2004, 104 pp. with index, \$22.95 softcover)