



Nation of dictators forming

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Apparently, according to a front-page article in last Sunday's paper, the legislature is considering giving the chief executive in the commonwealth even more control over the governing boards of our educational institutions in Kentucky – which is really not all that surprising.

Think about it.

The president issues an executive order whenever Congress does not act in accordance with his preferences. The majority leaders in Congress refuse to allow their colleagues to vote on controversial legislation (or consider a Supreme Court nominee) for fear it might not go their way.

School superintendents are pushing for more or less total control over everything that happens within their respective districts, those pesky site-based councils be damned.

In my profession, there used to be a well-accepted maxim, 'the faculty is the university.' Sadly, that has not been the case for several decades as administrators have slowly but surely taken almost complete control over virtually every aspect of the academy.

We used to be a country that valued consensus building; where the people we selected to be our leaders understood that their primary responsibility was to serve those who put them there. You know, listen to their ideas, suggestions and concerns – and incorporate them when crafting a particular course of action.

In short, we are slowly becoming a nation of dictators. Under the guise of 'strong leadership,' those at the top of our various organizational hierarchies are increasingly doing whatever they want, regardless of whether they have the support or concurrence of their constituencies.

Group decision-making is inherently superior to the unilateral variety. The private sector discovered this a long time ago; the most successful companies actively empower their employees in leadership roles on a routine basis.

Ideological disagreement and/or frustration with the pace of progress are not legitimate justifications for circumventing the participatory process.

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