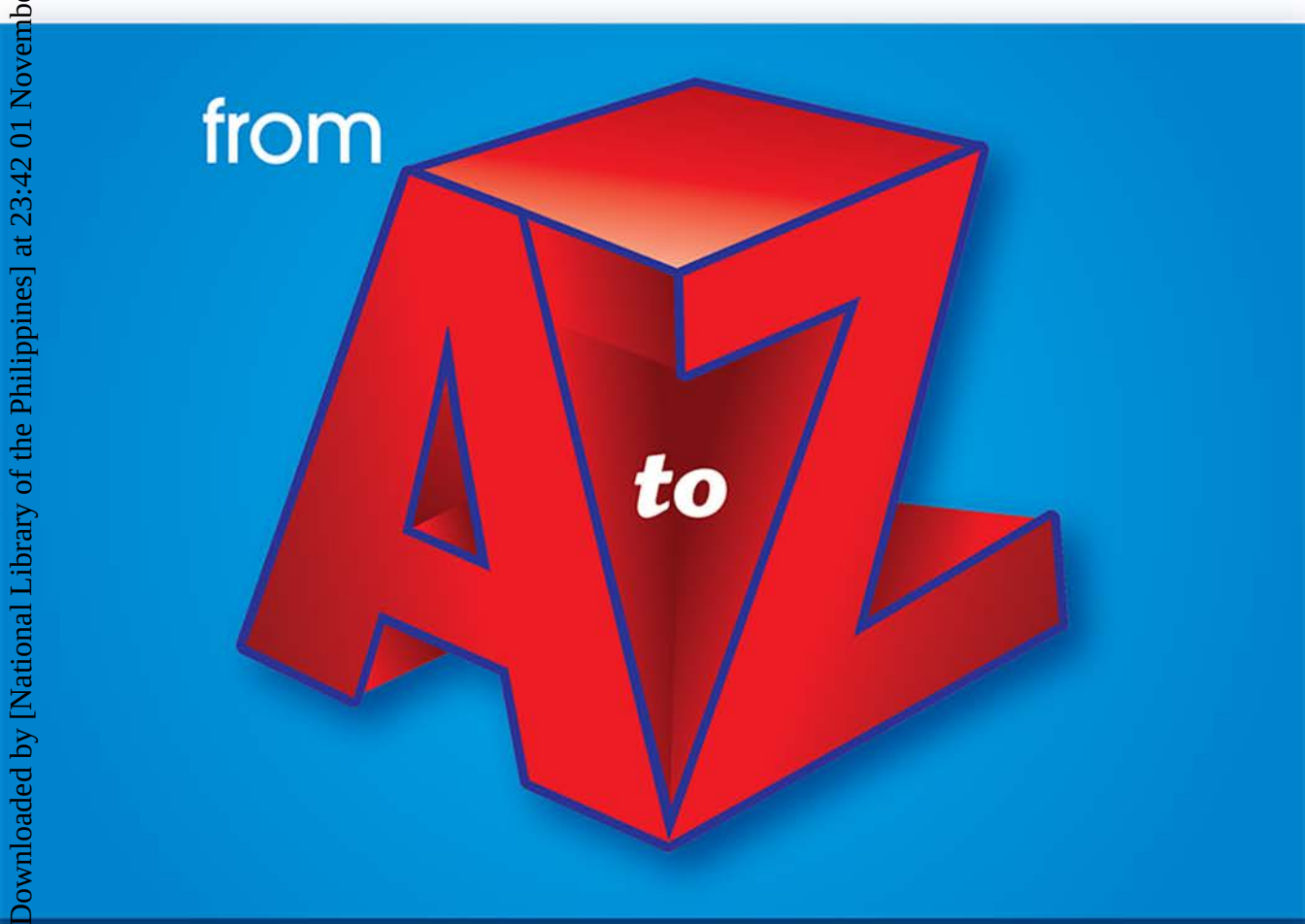
SECOND EDITION

THE PRINCIPALSHIP



RONALD WILLIAMSON
BARBARA R. BLACKBURN

An **Eye On Education** Book

ROUTLEDGE

The Principalship from A to Z

The second edition of *The Principalship from A to Z* provides a set of tools that can be used immediately to improve your leadership practice. Organized into 26 chapters—one for each letter of the alphabet—this book covers the most important and prevalent issues and skills for leaders in today's schools, including matters of limited funding, juggling social media, teacher evaluation, student achievement, school safety, and collaborating with parents. This accessible guide offers specific strategies that will help you navigate the complexity of your job and help you to become a more effective principal.

Topics new to this updated edition include:

- A renewed focus on student learning as the first priority of a principal and updated strategies for becoming a powerful instructional coach
- Information about restorative justice practices and other disciplinary approaches
- Timely new chapters on motivating teachers and students, using social media, and handling limited resources
- Updated resources at the end of each chapter

For both new and experienced leaders, you'll find this book to be full of practical templates and strategies to implement immediately. Many tools are available as free eResources from our website, www.routledge.com/9781138899568.

Ronald Williamson is Professor of Leadership and Counseling at Eastern Michigan University. He is a former principal, central office administrator, and Executive Director of the National Middle School Association (now AMLE).

Barbara R. Blackburn is the bestselling author of 15 books and is a sought-after national and international consultant.

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Literacy from A to Z
Barbara R. Blackburn

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The Principalship from A to Z

Ronald Williamson and Barbara R. Blackburn

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I dedicate this book to my wife Marsha, my partner for more than 40 years. You continually amaze me with your capacity for unconditional love, support, patience, and understanding. I am a better person because of my life with you.

—Ronald Williamson

I dedicate this book to the three principals who have influenced me in lasting ways. To Gene Gallelli, who hired me as a brand-new teacher and believed in me through my stumbles; to Ron Wilson, who provided me with multiple opportunities to grow as a teacher-leader; and to Bob Heath, whose partnership through our Professional Development School taught me the importance of inspiring teachers.

—Barbara R. Blackburn

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eResources

Many of the tools in this book can be downloaded and printed for classroom use. You can access these downloads by visiting the book product page on our website, www.routledge.com/9781138899568. Then click on the tab that says "eResources," and select the files. They will begin downloading to your computer.

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- Those thoughtful reviewers who read early drafts of this manuscript: Matthew Willis and Mark Neill
- Ron's colleagues in the Department of Leadership and Counseling at Eastern Michigan University
- The hundreds of principals we have worked with in every part of the nation—you hold one of the most demanding jobs in the world, but you, along with your teachers, are the greatest hope for improving the educational experience of all students.

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Meet the Authors

Ronald Williamson is a professor of leadership and counseling at Eastern Michigan University. He is a former principal, central office administrator, and Executive Director of the National Middle School Association (now AMLE). Ron authored more than 100 books, chapters, and articles in all of the major publications serving teachers and administrators. *Phi Delta Kappan* recognized two of his publications as among the most essential readings in middle grades education. Ron is the recipient of the Gruhn-Long-Melton Award from the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) in recognition of lifetime achievement in middle grades leadership. His most recent books include *Leading Schools in an Era of Declining Resources*, *Rigor in Your School: A Toolkit for Leaders*, and *The School Leader's Guide to Social Media*.

Ron works with schools throughout the country on issues of school improvement. He worked with several large urban school districts while a leadership coach in a project funded by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation. Ron also worked with the Galef Institute in Los Angeles on a Comprehensive School Reform project to improve schools in New York City, Houston, Louisville, and Los Angeles and served as an assessment consultant as well as editor of research briefs for the Principals' Partnership, a program of the Union Pacific Foundation. Recently he has worked with dozens of schools in Oregon on issues of college readiness and academic rigor. Ron can be reached through his website: http://ronwilliamson.com.

The author of 15 books, Barbara R. Blackburn has taught early childhood, elementary, middle, and high school students and has served as an educational consultant for three publishing companies. She holds a master's degree in school administration. She received her doctorate in curriculum and instruction from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She earned the 2006 Outstanding Junior Professor Award at Winthrop University. She left her position at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte to write and speak full time.

In addition to speaking at state and national conferences, she also presents workshops for teachers and administrators in elementary, middle, and high schools. Her most popular workshops include the following:

Rigorous Schools and Classrooms: Leading the Way
Motivating Struggling Learners
Rigor Is NOT a Four-Letter Word
Motivating Yourself and Others
Engaging Instruction Leads to Higher Achievement
High Expectations and Increased Support Lead to Success

If you'd like information about inviting Barbara Blackburn to speak to your group, please contact her at her website: www.barbarablackburnonline.com. We also invite you to send us your feedback as you implement the ideas from the book.

Introduction

We believe in the power of principals, working collaboratively with their teachers, to make a difference in the lives of students every day. We recognize, however, the complexity of the job, the need to balance competing priorities, and the high-stakes environment in which you work.

In light of this, we decided to write a book that would provide principals with a set of tools that can be immediately used to improve their practice. It is not lock-step program, nor is it a checklist. It does provide a set of recommended activities that, when consistently and persistently applied, will help you be more effective.

The Principalship from A to Z is organized into 26 chapters, one for each letter of the alphabet. The chapters are not sequential; they are organized around topics and areas of interest. You may start with any area that interests you or meets a current need.

In this second edition, we have updated content in every chapter. For example, there's a renewed focus on student learning as the first priority of a principal, information about restorative justice practices, and strategies for becoming a powerful instructional coach. You'll also find new chapters on Juggling Social Media, Limited Funding Doesn't Have to Limit You, Motivating Teachers, and Valuing Your Role as a Learner. Finally, we've redone the suggested resources at the end of each chapter, so you have new sources of information.

Our focus in this book is simple: to provide a practical guide with specific strategies that will help you navigate the many tasks you face as a principal. Each chapter is organized in a consistent manner. You will begin with "Think About It," a short question to prompt your thinking about a specific area of responsibility. Throughout the chapter, you will find easy-to-read charts that summarize or extend the examples we discuss, as well as samples of recommended ideas, such as walk-through templates or mission statements. Each chapter concludes with a summary of "Skills for Principals" related to the topic. Because each chapter is a synopsis of information, you may want more detail on certain topics. After the Skills for Principals section, you will find a list of recommended resources.

We believe that the greatest opportunity for a student's future success lies in the hands of principals and their teachers. We hope the strategies suggested in this book help you as you face that challenge.

A

All About Achievement

Great teachers and principals can help to close persistent achievement gaps, improve student attitudes about school, and build habits of mind that can change a student's life trajectory.

—from "Making the Case for RESPECT,"
U.S. Department of Education

Think About It

Is student achievement the main focus in your school? How is that evidenced?

As a principal, you are pulled in a variety of directions on any given day. The principalship is one of the most complex jobs imaginable. You are expected to manage personnel, handle discipline issues, improve instruction, and maintain student safety, while also balancing the budget and building positive relationships with families and community. That is just the starting point; the list of responsibilities can seem overwhelming. Throughout this book, we'll look at each of the core responsibilities of a principal.

However, it's important to begin with the most important role. We believe that student learning is the primary purpose of schools. It's not just

one of the roles of schools; it is the most important role. Despite competing demands, improved student learning is the most important role for principals. The most successful principals are those who recognize this importance and align every school activity with the school's achievement agenda. In this chapter, we'll look at how to make some key decisions using a lens of student achievement, the principal's role in an achievement-oriented school, and how to measure achievement.

It's All About Achievement

Effective principals adopt a "whatever it takes" stance toward student achievement. Every school activity is seen through the lens of student learning. Consider this question: "How would _____ positively impact student learning?" A principal shared it with us when we explained that most high-performing schools make decisions based on the answer to that question. Making decisions through a lens of student achievement means that we filter our choices through this question, making choices that have the most positive impact on student learning.

Questions to Consider

- How do we incorporate a range of instructional practices into each lesson?
- How do we use data on student learning to guide decisions about program design?
- How does this activity support our school's academic mission?
- How does our schedule give priority to student learning?
- Do we have a range of student activities that support our school's mission?

Three Key Roles in an Achievement-Oriented School

Ultimately, your role in an achievement-oriented school is threefold. You must be an instructional leader, a human resource developer, and a change agent. We'll give a short overview of these roles here, but we'll also discuss each role in other chapters of the book.

Instructional Leader With Inspiration

In order to move your school toward an achievement focus, you will need to understand the academic mission of the school and use every opportunity to talk about that mission with students, staff, families, and community (see Chapter C: Collaborating for Success). Effective principals use every opportunity to talk about achievement with staff and parents at parent–teacher organization meetings, community and church activities, neighborhood gatherings, and board of education meetings.

Improving the instructional program for students is the highest priority. Regularly meet with individuals and groups of faculty to discuss the achievement of their students and to develop plans for improving student achievement. Make improved student learning central to all discussions with staff (see Chapter I: Instructional Leadership and Chapter Q: Quality Teacher Evaluation).

Next, actively engage students, staff, and the community in school governance, particularly the review of achievement data and the development of plans to improve student learning (see Chapter D: Data-Driven Decisions). As you work with staff and the community, be sure to recognize staff members for their contributions to student learning and recognize students for their good work.

Sample Ways to Focus on Achievement

- Create posters with a phrase like "Learning Is Not Optional."
- Be sure that achievement is part of your school mission.
- Talk about student learning and achievement at all meetings.
- Use staff meetings as a time to focus on instructional improvement.
- Make a banner displaying the school's achievement slogan and hang it in the lobby.
- Recognize teachers and students who make a difference in the school's achievement agenda.
- Discuss achievement in every school newsletter and your school's blog or social media accounts.

Make achievement discussions a routine part of school life by including the topic in parent conferences, staff meetings, and in school newsletters

(see Chapter H: How to Impact School Culture). Broaden your influence outside the school building by establishing liaisons with families and community agencies to ensure that students' physical and socio-emotional health is maintained and that students have support and encouragement for the school's academic mission (see Chapter T: Teaming With Families and Community). Throughout all of these activities, model the use of appropriate interpersonal and instructional strategies to set a vision for the future.

Principal as Human Resource Developer

A second important role is that of a developer of human resources. In this area, recognize that students have a variety of learning styles and a range of development needs. Work with teachers to ensure that all students are challenged with appropriately high expectations and that the instructional program provides for the diverse learning styles of all students (see Chapter I: Instructional Leadership).

Similarly, establish high expectations for staff performance. This includes participating in professional development, using a variety of instructional strategies, providing support to students who engage in academically challenging experiences, monitoring student learning, and adjusting teaching practices to ensure high levels of student performance. As a part of each performance evaluation, talk with teachers about how they use innovative practices as well as the levels of instructional and curricular effectiveness (see Chapters P, Q, and W).

Support faculty as they try new instructional and curricular practices and understand that a lack of initial success with those practices is an opportunity to learn, refine, and strengthen instructional skills. Provide professional development activities that focus on improving curricular and instructional practice (see Chapter P: Professional Learning Facilitates Growth). Work with staff members to develop and maintain a curricular program that provides rigor and challenge for all students. Rigorous scientific thought, the arts, foreign language, mathematical reasoning, and written and oral expression should be an integral part of the program for all students, not simply those in honors courses or on a college-bound track.

Principal as Change Agent

Part of the first two roles is the job of change agent. It's so important that we want to highlight the role. Recognize and act on the knowledge that students learn at different rates, have varied interests, and come to school with

a variety of experiences and backgrounds. Build accountability for student achievement into every aspect of the school's program. Take responsibility for student learning, use data as a basis for instructional decision making, and take every opportunity to address achievement issues.

Work with teachers to create organizational structures that ensure every student is known by at least one adult and that each student's achievement is closely monitored. Provide for the effective use of school time, avoid interruptions to the instructional program, and ensure productive and purposeful classroom activities (see Chapter Z: Zero in on Your Schedule). Attend to the academic needs of all students regardless of previous school experience by providing all students with a rigorous intellectual experience that requires the use of learning rather than storage and retrieval.

Establish and support a co-curricular program that provides activities focused on academic and intellectual interests, as well as physical activity. Finally, employ a variety of achievement measures, including both standardized tests and district and classroom assessments, use of student products and demonstrations, and other measures of achievement.

Measuring Achievement

If student achievement is our goal, how do we measure it? First, it is important to become comfortable looking at and using data to guide discussions with staff and parents. Make a decision that you will review and be familiar with your data and then use those data as you talk with your staff, parents, and students. Don't use it to criticize, but use it as an opportunity to learn and grow together. In Chapter D: Data-Driven Decisions, you will find specific suggestions for working with data.

Second, remember to always use multiple measures. If you focus only on standardized test data, you will limit the conversation. We strongly believe that standardized test scores should be a starting point, not the finish line. Be sure to look at a wide range of formal and informal data.

Possible Data Sources

- Standardized achievement tests
- Local assessments
- Diagnostic tests
- Student portfolios/projects
- Teacher grades

(*Continued*)

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- Attendance and dropout rates
- Student demographics
- Teacher demographics (experience, professional development)

Third, use data routinely as a part of your discussions with teachers, parents, older students, and other stakeholders. One principal commented, "Our test scores aren't great. So I just don't talk about them." That does a disservice to your faculty and students. It's important to share information about test scores and other data. Use the scores as a stepping-stone to discuss what is going on in your school and create plans for improvement. Share the positive focus, growth points, and goals for the futures. If you simply ignore your data, you are allowing others to define you simply by the numbers.

Questions to Guide the Conversation about Data

- What is the status of the achievement agenda in our school?
- How does the achievement of our students compare with the achievement of schools in our district/county?
- What is the distribution of achievement among students based on gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status?
- What is the perception of achievement in our school among students, parents, faculty, and the community?
- What specific activities take place in our school to promote conversations and discussions of achievement?
- What professional development is provided at our school to ensure improved student achievement?
- What groups or individuals are participating in the development of an Achievement Improvement Plan?
- Who is accountable for improved achievement in our school?
- What is the achievement "bottom line" in our school?

A Final Note

The job of a principal is multifaceted and complex. In the following chapters, we'll look at the key aspects of the principal's job. Each of these roles should be viewed through one lens: The primary role of the school is to assure that students learn.

Skills for Principals

- Develop a shared vision of high performance for every student.
- Mobilize staff to achieve the school's vision.
- Work to develop a coherent and rigorous curriculum.
- Create a personalized, motivating, and engaging learning environment for every student.
- Provide appropriate instructional supervision.
- Develop the instructional capacity of teachers and other staff.
- Utilize assessment and accountability systems to monitor student progress.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

Turnaround Principles for Turnaround Principals: Protocols for Creating a Culture of Student Achievement by Kwame Andre Carr.

The Principal: Three Keys to Maximizing Impact by Michael Fullan.

This report describes the principal's role in improving student achievement: www.mdk12.org/process/student_achievement/index.html

This report describes the various roles of a principal, including a focus on achievement: www.centerforpubliceducation.org/principal-perspective

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B

Begin With a Vision

The very essence of leadership is [that] you have a vision. It's got to be a vision you articulate clearly and forcefully on every occasion. You can't blow an uncertain trumpet.

—Theodore Hesburgh

Think About It

What is your vision for your school? How many others in your school community share the same vision?

Having a clear vision or purpose for a school is important for a principal. Not only must you have a personal vision, but also you must be committed to working collaboratively with teachers, staff, families, and students to articulate a clear and compelling shared vision for the school. In this chapter, we will look at how to create a personal vision statement, how to build a shared vision statement for your school, and ideas for using that vision as a motivational tool.

Creating a Personal Vision Statement

There is an old saying, "You have to take care of yourself before you can take care of others." The same is true of vision. Before you can help others build a shared vision, you must be clear about your own vision. Writing a statement of personal vision provides three benefits. It:

1. Helps to clarify values and beliefs.
2. Identifies priorities in your life.
3. Clarifies what is most important and how you want to spend your time and energy.

The purpose of a vision statement is to inspire, energize, and motivate. It should be emotional and reflect your feelings. Using the process below, you can create your own statement of personal vision. Be sure to include sensory details to provide power to your statement. Also, the more time you invest in reflection at the beginning of the process, the clearer your finished product will be.

Process for Developing a Personal Vision Statement

Step 1: Think about your personal and professional life. Describe what you would like to achieve and the contributions you would like to make. Think of it as something already accomplished. Describe what it looks like and feels like. For example, imagine hovering in a hot air balloon over your life. Imagine your life as successful as it might be—what would you see, what would you feel, what would you hear?

Step 2: Consider the following things based on what you have written—self-image, relationships, personal interests, and community. Examine each item in your draft to ensure that it still fits.

Step 3: Develop a list of values. Identify the most important values in your life. Once this is done, review the list and rank them from most to least important. Remove the least important. Re-rank if appropriate. Check for relevance with your earlier statement. Eliminate any item that is not relevant.

Step 4: Use the items from the first three steps to develop a statement about who you are. Review and edit the statement as often as needed until you believe that it accurately reflects who you are.

Ethics and Integrity

Principals must act ethically and with integrity. As you develop your personal vision, it is important to consider your own personal ethic. Joan Shapiro and Jacqueline Stefkovich (2016) found that individuals view their work through a variety of quite different lenses. Our personal ethic is shaped by our own unique experiences in life, the people we meet, the communities where we live, the family we're born into, the places we work, and social and cultural events that shape our lives.

Because our ethic is very personal and reflects our unique set of experiences, that means that there is no single, perfect ethic. Personal ethics vary considerably even though people often use similar words to express them, things like "best interests of students." But those words can often have very different meanings for individuals. That's why the most effective leaders are clear about their beliefs but respectful of others even though they may disagree. Any organization as complex as a school will have multiple ethics evident at any time.

Your personal ethic consists of the most fundamental beliefs you hold about life, about your work, and about relationships with people. As you develop your personal vision, filter it through your personal ethic. Consider whether it reflects your most deeply held beliefs about your life and work.

Creating a School-Wide Vision

Michael Fullan (2014) describes a collaboratively developed and shared vision as one of the seven elements of success for a school leader. A vision that is shared among school stakeholders is a powerful statement about the school's ultimate purpose. In other words, it is a collective commitment of the school community.

Effective mission statements are short and easily remembered; they are used for setting goals and priorities for the school, teachers, and students; and they are helpful in selecting the specific programs, resources, activities, and personnel used to achieve the goals. As you consider the development of a mission statement (or the revision of a current mission statement that may not be effective), incorporate the characteristics of effective statements.

Components of a Mission or Vision Statement

- A statement of purpose: Overall purpose for the school
- An indication of uniqueness: What distinguishes the school from others?

(*Continued*)

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- An explicit statement of commitment: Above all else, what is most important?
- A clear value position: Reflection of the school's core and fundamental values, values that will guide individual behavior and school practice

Now let's look at the process for developing an institutional mission statement. If you currently have a mission statement, you may want to adapt this process to review and update. Even the best mission statements need periodic review and revision. This review process allows your school staff to adjust the mission based on current information and needs. It also allows staff to recommit to the school's core values and beliefs.

Process for Developing an Institutional Mission Statement

Activity 1: What are the things that people are pleased with and frustrated with at this school? (Designed to get the issues on the table.)

Activity 2: As we begin planning for our future, what values are most important to you as we create our vision statement? (Use "I believe" statements, which focus on the important things.)

Note: A helpful approach is to have the group read some common articles or books. For example, information about student learning or student needs, future trends, and information about recommendations for schools at that level. Often professional associations (National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Association of Elementary School Principals, Association for Middle Level Education, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) have useful resources. Shared readings create a common base of information and are particularly useful to minimize the barriers between teachers and parents when parents often defer to teachers as the "experts."

Activity 3: Imagine it is the year 2020. You have been able to operationalize your beliefs. What will you see? What will you hear? What will your school feel like? Describe the vision. (Helps to identify the target the school will work toward.)

Activity 4: In work groups, develop a draft mission statement to be shared with the larger group. (Development of multiple models promotes discussion, clarification, and consensus building.)

Once you have developed a draft statement, move to the next phase to prepare a completed statement.

Moving From Statement to Implementation

Step 1	Task
Share draft with constituent groups to elicit feedback.	Distribute draft statement to constituent groups and provide opportunity for critique and feedback.
Strategies	
■ Distribute to staff using e-mail and include a short online survey to gather feedback. ■ Include draft in parent newsletters with either a response sheet or link to an online survey for feedback. ■ Provide an opportunity for members of the writing group to present the draft at a staff meeting and lead table discussions to gain feedback. ■ Hold an after-school or before-school session at which teachers can meet with the writing team members to discuss the draft. ■ Work with your parent group to schedule a meeting to share the draft with parents and gather feedback and suggestions.	
Step 2	**Task**
Revise the statement based on feedback.	Writing group meets and reviews feedback and makes revisions.
Strategies	
■ Hold a half-day meeting to review feedback and make revisions. ■ Meet after school to review feedback and make revisions.	
Step 3	**Task**
Seek agreement from appropriate constituent groups.	The revised statement is shared with constituent groups and their agreement and support is sought.
Strategies	
■ Share with a Building Leadership Team and seek their support. ■ Share with the faculty and seek their support. ■ Share with families and ask the parent–teacher organization for support.	

(*Continued*)

(*Continued*)

Step 4	Task
Finalize the mission statement.	Make any needed adjustments, if any.
Strategies	
■ Share the statement widely with all school constituent groups. ■ Post the statement in every classroom. ■ Add the statement to your school letterhead. ■ Include the statement on the school website and social media accounts. ■ Create a banner displaying the statement and hang it in the entrance to the school, in the gymnasium, or in a multipurpose room.	

Vision as a Motivational Tool

Vision is one of the most effective tools for personal and group motivation. Having a vision, then revisiting that vision regularly, helps you and your faculty focus on what is most important and balance the competing demands you face.

In *Rigor is NOT a Four-Letter Word* (2013), Barbara recommended that teachers write vision letters. The task is to imagine that it is the last day of school. Write a letter or e-mail message to another teacher describing the past year: all that students accomplished, how they have changed, and what they have learned. It is a simple activity designed to keep teachers motivated, but it can serve as a building block for your vision process.

Ask your teachers to write the letter to you. Imagine it is the last day of school, and this past year was the best year of their teaching careers. What happened in their classroom? What happened in the school? How did their students change? How did they grow personally and professionally? Then, use the letters as a part of a discussion with each teacher about their vision and how it relates to yours and the vision for the school. Also ask them how you can help them accomplish their goals. It's a meaningful way to start the conversation about vision in your school.

Gather Data and Assess Your Progress

You will also want to routinely gather data (see Chapter D: Data-Driven Decisions) about your school. Use the data with your School Improvement

Team or other group to discuss progress toward achieving your school's vision. Use these discussions to modify and refine the vision if appropriate.

A Final Note

Leadership begins with vision. If you don't have a vision, then you won't have a clear direction when the pressures mount. A clear vision helps you set priorities and guides decisions. Take the time to articulate your own vision and to work with your school community to develop a shared vision.

Skills for Principals

- Develop a shared vision of high performance for every student.
- Mobilize staff to achieve the school's vision.
- Use varied sources of information to shape a vision, mission, and goals for the school.
- Align the school vision, mission, and goals with district, state, and federal policies.
- Incorporate a variety of perspectives into development of the school vision, mission, and goals.
- Work for consensus about the vision, mission, and goals of the school.
- Advocate a vision of learning in which every student has equitable, appropriate, and effective learning opportunities to achieve at a high level.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

Leading Modern Learning: A Blueprint for Vision-Driven Schools by Jay McTighe and Greg Curtis.

Ethical Leadership in Schools: Creating Community in an Environment of Accountability by Kenneth A. Strike.

This blog entry describes how to create a personal mission statement and vision statement: www.liquidplanner.com/blog/create-personal-mission-vision-statement-year/

This is the School Superintendents' Association's Statement of Ethics for Educational Leaders: www.aasa.org/content.aspx?id=1390

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C

Collaborating for Success

The basic principle which I believe has contributed more than any other to the building of our business as it is today, is the ownership of our company by the people employed in it.

—James E. Casey, founder of UPS

Think About It

Do the members of your school community have ownership in the school, or do they simply feel as though they are renting space?

There is growing recognition that a school's success is linked to the quality of leadership in that school and that leadership is not confined to a single individual but, rather, is broadly defined. We also realize the need for those who are most closely involved in implementing programs to be involved in decisions about those programs and practices. There is a consensus among researchers about the importance of teacher participation in decision making as a way to improve efficiency and organizational effectiveness, even though there is no agreement on the level of participation. In this chapter, we'll look at how to expand ownership and engage teachers and other constituents in improving their school.

Delegation of Responsibilities

One type of shared decision making is the delegation of decisions to assistants and other staff. Although this is a common management approach, if you want it to be effective, you must be sure that people know what is expected and desired of them, have access to the information needed, possess the technical knowledge needed, and have the interpersonal skills to accomplish the task.

Delegation is a useful strategy in two specific cases. First, when tasks are straightforward and the procedures are known, delegation is a way to increase your efficiency. Second, it is an effective method for personnel development when situations are more ambiguous. For example, a new assistant principal may benefit from chairing a major committee or being a member of a district work group.

Sample Delegated Responsibilities

- Scheduling school facilities
- Personnel evaluation to an assistant principal
- Processing work orders
- Chairing school committees

Shared Decision Making

Shared decision making may include teachers, and other staff, collaborating with peers to address instructional issues, or it may include involving teachers in decisions about managerial concerns and school or district policy. There is no formula or perfect method for shared decision making; however, it is most successful when the involvement is authentic.

Examples of Teacher Involvement in Decision Making

Professional Development Committee: Teachers on the committee review applications from teachers to attend conferences and make recommendations and decisions about approved conference travel.

School Improvement Committee: Teachers and parents work with the principal to set school priorities, determine improvement projects, and allocate resources.

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Principal's Advisory Committee: This group provides the principal with advice about important decisions. They serve as a sounding board for both day-to-day routines and important policy changes.

Scheduling Work Group: Many principals ask teachers, or department chairs in high schools, to work with them to determine the school's schedule and teacher assignments.

Budget Review Committee: Some principals share information about the school's budget with teachers and work with a small group to make decisions about spending priorities.

Benefits and Challenges

There are many benefits of shared decision making:

- Higher quality decisions because more perspectives are considered
- Increased job satisfaction and morale
- Heightened sense of empowerment
- Greater ownership of school goals and priorities when participants have a stake in the decision
- Improved student achievement because of greater coordination of work among teachers

On the other hand, there are also challenges, or potential obstacles, to shared decision making, which include the following:

- Expanded participation may require more time to make decisions
- Group dynamics may stifle ideas, leading to "groupthink"
- Polarization around specific points of view
- People feeling left out or that some have greater access and opportunity to influence decisions

Overall, the long-term benefits of shared decision making outweigh the mostly short-term, initial obstacles. When employees are active partners in critical decisions about the school, they have more ownership of the school's direction and a greater commitment to its success.

Planning for Shared Decision Making

The first step is to decide whom to involve. Ask yourself two questions:

1. Who is most closely involved?
2. How much can people contribute? What is their level of expertise?

You might also consider other factors in order to facilitate your decision. Hoy and Tarter (2008) have suggested that if people have a stake in the outcome and have some level of expertise, they should be involved. If people are indifferent to the outcome and have no expertise, no involvement is needed. Finally, if people are concerned with the outcome but lack expertise or have expertise but are indifferent, then they should have limited participation.

Things to Consider

- What is the task?
- Who has a stake in the decision?
- Who should appropriately be involved because of their expertise or their role?
- How will the group be organized?
- What are the group norms?
- How will the decision be made?
- What is the timeline for completion of the task?

Leadership Teams

One of the most common structures for shared decision making is a School Leadership Team, sometimes called a School Site Council or a School Improvement Team. It is generally composed of some combination of administrators, teachers, parents, school staff, and community members. Depending on your state or district, there may be laws or guidelines that determine the composition of your team. Some secondary schools (middle and high school) also include students.

As with any team, different points of view are important for adding value to the decision-making process. However, in order to be most effective, principals should provide three structures to the group:

Structures for Effective Leadership Teams

- Establish norms of operation (how the group will function) and norms for decision making.
- Be absolutely clear about the link to the school's mission and the importance of advancing institutional goals.
- Develop and model thoughtful decision-making processes.

Depending on the specific needs of your school, you may have a variety of teams, such as instructional leadership teams or Principal's Advisory Councils. Your first decision is to determine what teams you need and how they will function within the overall decision-making structure.

Checklist for Formation of Shared Decision-making Teams

_____ Is the purpose clear? Is the role well defined?

_____ Is membership representative? Is membership appropriate to the task?

_____ Are there agreed-upon norms for operation? For decision making?

_____ Is there a mechanism to communicate with the larger school community? With other decision-making groups?

_____ What is the process for concluding the team's work?

You will want to be sure that the purpose of each team is clear and the roles are well defined.

Site-Based Management

The final type of shared decision making that we will discuss is site-based management, which is often used to describe local, school-level decision-making processes. Most site-based models give the principal great

autonomy on a whole range of issues involving personnel, budget, and program. But, almost always, the principal operates within district guidelines, which may limit the autonomy.

Successful site-based management programs focus intently on improving student learning and are characterized by a high level of involvement from stakeholders, a clear alignment of vision and goals with school mission, and reflect a commitment to collaborative decision making.

As with any process of broad-based decision making, there are facilitators of effectiveness, as well as obstacles.

Facilitators and Barriers for Decision Making

Facilitators of Successful Shared Decision-making Models	Barriers to Successful Shared Decision-making Models
■ Appropriate, ongoing professional development for all stakeholders in the change process, including conflict management and decision-making models ■ Adequate time to meet, plan, implement, and evaluate decisions. Lots of time required initially to get started ■ Clear understanding of the areas/topics that the group can address ■ Communication plan to share information with stakeholders ■ Principal comfort and support ■ Accountability and responsibility of participants ■ Availability of technical assistance	■ Limits of decision-making authority are unclear and undefined ■ Principal directs and tells rather than guides ■ Only principal or superintendent held accountable for decisions ■ Groups do not have power to make "real" decisions and get mired in unimportant details

A Final Note

The job of a principal is too complex to isolate oneself when making decisions. The effective principal delegates some responsibilities but shares the decision-making process for some areas with stakeholders. They find an appropriate balance.

While ultimate responsibility for your school's program lies with you, it is important to remember that the evidence is clear—involving others in helping to make decisions results in "better" decisions and leads to greater commitment to the success of the school.

Skills for Principals

- Engage staff and community in a shared vision, mission, and goals for the school.
- Ensure that diverse stakeholders, even those with conflicting points of view, are involved in school decision making to build shared understanding and commitment to the vision and mission.
- Recognize the value of engaging staff and community in planning and implementing changes to school programs and activities.
- Model positive group processes that create a climate of openness and collaboration.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

Collaborative Leadership: Building Relationships, Handling Conflict, and Sharing Control by David Archer and Alex Cameron.

What Every Principal Should Know About Collaborative Leadership by Jeffrey G. Glanz.

This article is about building collaborative leadership: www.nassp.org/tabid/3788/default.aspx?topic=Building_Effective_Collaborative_Leadership_Some_Practicalities

This website provides a toolbox on collaborative leadership: http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/leadership/leadership-ideas/collaborative-leadership/main

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D

Data-Driven Decisions

It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data.

—Sherlock Holmes

Think About It

Are you overwhelmed with data? How do you use the data you have?

Many principals feel as if they are drowning in data, overwhelmed with the sheer amount of data they have, and unsure how to use the information. In this chapter, we'll look at a four-step approach to working with data.

Four-Step Approach

1. Determine what you want to know.
2. Decide how you will collect the data.
3. Analyze the data and results.
4. Set priorities and goals based on the analysis.

Determine What You Want to Know

First, determine what you want to know. Begin by recognizing there are different kinds of data.

Types of Data

Demographic data: These data describe students and are most often used to understand how to make sense of data on student learning. They provide insight into equity within your student learning data. Demographic data will reveal "who got it."

Achievement and learning data: These data tell us what is going on in your school. They tell us what students learned and what they achieved. These data help us understand how students are achieving. Student learning data will reveal "what students got."

Instructional process data: These are the data that help you understand why students achieved at the level they did. If student achievement in mathematics is low, you might look at the type of mathematics that students do, the time they spend on math, or the alignment of mathematics with state and local standards or benchmarks. School process data will reveal "how or why they got it." These data can include information about teacher participation in professional development.

Attitudinal data: These data tell you how people feel about a program and how they experience your school or district program. Attitudinal or perception data will reveal "how they feel or what they believe about it."

Select an area of focus and any demographic indicators. For example, do you want to determine whether your minority girls are performing lower in math? Then, use that as a focus and write a set of data analysis questions related to the issue.

Examples of Data Analysis Questions

- What is the distribution of student grades in mathematics based on gender and ethnicity?
- How do student scores on the state mathematics test compare when disaggregated by gender and ethnicity?
- What is the distribution of students based on gender and ethnicity in the different levels of mathematics?
- What academic support services are provided for minority female students?

Consider any factors that might narrow the questions and identify data sources and/or methods of data collection.

Collect Data

Next, collect data. You may need to simply locate readily available data or determine ways to gather local data about the focus issue. Collected data should align with the data analysis questions. You might use a crosswalk such as the one below to track the appropriate data to match each question.

Crosswalk of Data

Data Analysis Question	Demographic Data	Achievement and Learning Data	Tracking Processes Data	Attitudinal Data

You likely have data readily available to you. Examples include test score data, test item analyses, enrollment in classes, parent or student survey results, attendance patterns, and requests to drop/add classes and/or teachers.

If you need additional data, you might commission a study of local issues and concerns, provide time for teachers to shadow students, or design and administer a short survey. And don't forget that a powerful source of information is student work. You might conduct a walk-through with faculty to observe the school and student work or examine student work during grade-level, team, or department meetings (see Chapter P: Professional Learning Facilitates Growth).

Instructional Process Data From a Student's Perspective

An effective technique for gathering information on the curricular and instructional experiences of students is to conduct a shadow study. Shadow studies involve selecting students at random and following them throughout their day.

The protocol, originally developed by the NASSP, suggests charting the experience of students at five- to seven-minute intervals. This allows the observer to see the ebb and flow of activities during the day. Spending the entire day with a student and documenting his or her experience provides interesting insights into the student experience. Of course, students quickly figure out that something is going on. The best approach is to talk with the student and assure him or her that you are not gathering information about them to report to the office.

Shadow Study Observation Form

Time	Specific Behavior (Five- to Seven-Minute Intervals)	Comments and Impressions

After gathering the data, the information can be used as a springboard to launch conversations at the faculty, grade, or departmental level about the experience of students. The patterns that emerge across students and across classrooms can provide helpful guidance to improve instructional quality.

Another way to obtain the students' view of instruction is to conduct focus groups or form a Principal's Advisory Group of students. If students trust you, and they believe that you want to listen to them, students will give you frank feedback about schools. One of our favorite questions to ask students is, "If you were in charge of the school, what would you change?"

In *Rigor Is NOT a Four-Letter Word* (2013), Barbara shares her experience with a student responding to this question. The school had strong test scores and used those scores to place students in tracked classes. The principal and faculty believed that all classes were of high quality and were sufficiently challenging for each student. Gabrielle, a sixth-grader in the school, responded, "For people who don't understand as much . . . [they should] be in higher-level classes to understand more [because] if they already don't know much, you don't want to teach them to not know much over and over."

The principal and teachers were taken aback. They had no idea that students in the school viewed the lower-level classes as less challenging. The feedback from Gabrielle prompted them to reevaluate their curriculum and instruction.

Other Ideas for Collecting Data

- Use an online survey with stakeholder groups (students, parents, teachers, administrators, counselors, support staff).
- Interview random members of each group concerning the program, philosophy, and climate.
- Conduct a shadow study of students.
- Assess specific components of the program (counseling services, reading, instructional strategies, curriculum).
- Gather currently available information (achievement tests, student grades, attendance).
- Conduct a self-study looking at alignment with your state or local standards.
- Ask for an external review by a professional organization or a noted school researcher.
- Hold focus group interviews with key stakeholder groups.
- Review pertinent information (department minutes, student schedules, student disciplinary referrals).

Analyze the Data and Results

As you begin to analyze your data, be sure to involve all constituents in the process. Data is best analyzed when a variety of perspectives, or points of view, are present. That leads to a richer, more thought-provoking analysis.

Ways to Involve Constituents

- Ensure representative membership.
- Ensure participation by those with the most to lose or gain.
- Seek and involve "known dissenters."
- Have participants assist in identifying sources of data and gathering and analysis of data and information.
- Seek members to contribute specific expertise to committee initiatives.

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- Create a wiki for sharing information and gathering feedback from participants.
- Conduct the review as an open process so that those who are often excluded have every opportunity to participate.

Clarify specific tasks, as well as the timeline, so that everyone can participate appropriately. Planning thoughtfully and purposefully for the discussion is key to positive growth. One of the lessons we've learned about presenting and using data is the importance of presenting data in a non-threatening way to ensure purposeful engagement. Finally, as you look in-depth at your data, discuss how you will share the results.

Set Priorities and Goals

Finally, work with your School Improvement Team or other collaborative group to determine priorities based on your area of focus and your data analysis. Use your school's mission or vision statement as a guide for selecting appropriate strategies.

One of the challenges associated with data is that you may get different information from different sources. Or, you may find that you don't have nearly enough data in other areas.

Do a "Pattern Analysis," where you look across data points and identify areas for improvement. Always look for multiple indicators, or data points, that may tell you similar things. If they conflict, it may indicate the need for further data. Here's one graphic organizer that can be used to conduct a pattern analysis.

Pattern Analysis Template

Data Source	Strengths	Opportunities
Overall Areas of Focus (based on multiple data sources)		
Strengths	**Opportunities for Growth**	

Adapted from: Williamson & Blackburn (2011)

Once you have identified patterns, developed your priorities, goals, or area of focus, study and select strategies that will allow you to address the area of focus. This is a pivotal point. Too often, we gather and analyze data and set goals, but then we fail to use that information to make decisions on an ongoing basis. We've developed five rules to guide you through the process.

Using Data to Set Priorities and Make Decisions

Rule #1:	**Focus**—Select an area of focus and establish clear priorities. Too many improvement efforts falter because of a diffused focus.
Rule #2:	**Be guided by questions**—Be clear about what you want to know and prepare data analysis questions to guide the collection of data and its analysis.
Rule #3:	**Design thoughtful and provocative conversations**—Plan engaging discussions about the data. Raise provocative questions about those factors (classroom instruction) that contribute to understanding the data.
Rule #4:	**Engage appropriate stakeholders**—It is vitally important that appropriate stakeholders contribute to the conversation and analysis of the data. Involvement builds support and capacity for school improvement.
Rule #5:	**Focus**—Maintain the focus, select strategies aligned with the area of focus, and regularly monitor and adjust your improvement strategies.

A Final Note

Unfortunately, data are often simply stacks of numbers. However, if you dig deeper, invest in analytical discussions of the data, and use that information to help you plan, you can FOCUS and see your work pay off in results.

Focus

F	First things first.
O	Outline framework with questions.
C	Conversations planned for results.
U	Understand and engage all stakeholders.
S	Stay on track.

Skills for Principals

- Collect and analyze data and other information about the school's program.
- Use data to identify goals for improving the school's educational program for every student.
- Create a School Improvement Plan based on data about student learning, school climate, and instructional effectiveness.
- Monitor and adjust school improvement initiatives based on data.
- Ensure the evaluation of school programs.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

Data-Driven Leadership by Amanda Datnow and Vicki Park.

Transforming Teaching and Learning Through Data-Driven Decision Making by Ellen B. Mandinach and Sharnell S. Jackson.

This report describes what is working in schools related to the use of data: http://aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Policy_and_Advocacy/files/UsingDataToImproveSchools.pdf

This guide explains the hows and whys of using data in schools: www.schoolturnaroundsupport.org/resources/using-data-improve-schools-whats-working

E

Effective School and Classroom Discipline

Too many rules get in the way of leadership. They just put you in a box. . . . People set rules to keep from making decisions.

—Coach Mike Krzyzewski

Think About It

How much of your time is taken up with discipline issues?

Dealing with discipline issues can become all-consuming for a principal. Therefore, it is important to understand the underlying causes of discipline problems and create a structure to minimize these problems.

First, it's important to recognize why students misbehave. Lucinda Johnston describes four main sources of misbehavior:

Sources of Misbehavior

Kids being kids: Normal kid exuberance coupled with a lack of sophistication or mature judgment.

Different agenda: Bored, unable to do class work, angry about something, or disturbed by events in their lives, students act out to draw attention to their needs.

Value incongruence: Because of experience, family circumstances, or culture norms, student values may be incongruent with those of the school so that they are unable to act appropriately.

Disorders: Psychological and social disorders may range from very mild to extremely severe.

Policies and procedures should be appropriate for your school population, addressing the sources of misbehavior and taking into consideration such factors as the age level of your students. Many school districts have begun to use forms of restorative justice for some forms of student misbehavior as an alternative to traditional disciplinary approaches.

Restorative Justice

Restorative justice is an approach to discipline that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by misbehavior and encourages a cooperative process that involves the victim and the person misbehaving (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005; Zehr, 2015).

Restorative justice provides an opportunity for those impacted by an event to talk about the impact and take steps to make things right. Programs are anchored in three principles:

- Authentic justice works to restore those that are injured.
- Those most directly involved in and affected by a behavior should have the chance to participate if they desire (Zehr, 2015).
- A school community should focus on building and maintaining a just peace.

In schools, restorative justice programs are often used by teachers in their classroom, as well as by administrators dealing with student discipline. Most often, restorative practices involve three steps:

Three Steps to Restorative Practices

- Identify the harm,
- Involve all stakeholders depending on their comfort level, and
- Take steps to repair the harm and address the causes.

Discipline Policies

Regardless of whether you use restorative justice practices or a traditional approach to student discipline, when developing your discipline policy, remember that the most effective policies keep it simple so that everyone can remember the components. Similarly, be sure the language is easily understood. Finally, focus on basic rights such as safety, learning, and respect. The sample below demonstrates how you can explain the philosophy of your school through a discipline policy.

Sample School Discipline Policy

At Maple Ridge School, we believe that people have certain rights and responsibilities. These rights and responsibilities are expressed as our core values and drive what we do on a daily basis. These core values apply to every member of our learning community. We believe that members of this learning community have:

- The right to be safe and treated with respect.
- The right to learn.
- The responsibility to be honest citizens.
- The responsibility to be polite.
- The responsibility to use time and resources wisely.

Source: Lucinda Johnston

Johnston provides several guiding questions that are helpful as you consider revising or writing a policy.

Guiding Questions When Developing or Revising a Discipline Plan

- What do we value and believe about the way people should treat one another?
- What are the rights and responsibilities of everyone in this learning community?
- How do we gather data about the core values of our school community?
- What do we know about facilitating productive behavior?
- How does our behavior affect our students?
- What do students need to behave productively?

Keep in mind that you want a discipline policy that is effective and supports a positive school culture (see Chapter H: How to Impact School Culture). Therefore, simply writing a list of statements, posting them in your school, and demanding compliance usually creates more problems than it solves. As with any other change initiative, seek input from all stakeholders, including students. Be sure everyone understands the reason for each part of the policy, and put the focus on school values rather than punishment. As one experienced principal explained, "The biggest lesson I've learned is not to develop a rigid policy to deal with an isolated situation."

Characteristics of Effective Discipline Policies

Information: Policies must be aimed at factual problems, not rumors. Gather accurate data before changing policy.

Involvement: All groups affected by a policy should be involved in creating it, including students.

Problem definition: Not everyone will agree on what constitutes undesirable student behavior. Define the problem as a first step toward solving it.

Flexibility: Rather than relying on a rigid system of penalties, policy should allow for different situations and prescribe different methods for different problems.

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Communication: All students, parents, and school personnel should be aware of the school's discipline policy or student code of conduct. A readable, well-designed method of sharing the policy should be developed.

Consistent enforcement: If students are to cooperate with a discipline code, they must believe that they will be treated fairly.

Adapted from: "Student Discipline Policies," ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, *ERIC Digest no. 12 (ED 259455).*

Share With Parents and Students

It is important to share the discipline policy with both parents and students. Be clear about what it means and about the process you will use to enforce the discipline policy. Many principals meet with groups of students at the beginning of every year to talk about the discipline policy.

Expectations Versus Rules

As you provide leadership in your school related to discipline, it is helpful to discuss the difference between expectations and rules. Expectations convey standards of behavior, whereas rules define misbehavior. People tend to live up or down to our expectations. Students need adults to have clear and consistent behavior expectations. Additionally, for student management to be most effective, adult behavior needs to be consistent with their expectations. For example, if a teacher expects students to be on time for class and ready to work, he or she must have work on the board and begin instruction immediately after the bell. Or, if an administrator expects students to be friendly and courteous, he or she must smile and greet students.

Helpful Hints

- Remember that expectations are different than rules. Be sure that most of the adults in your school agree with the behavior expectations.
- With staff, brainstorm ways to behave as if you expect productive behavior from people.
- Post expectations in prominent places throughout the school.

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- Use the word "expect" when conveying expectations.
- Discuss ways to deal with students who do not live up to expectations.

Rules provide the framework for behavior in the school setting, and their presence allows the school community to engage in teaching and learning.

School rules are clearly value driven and should be stated in a positive format. School rules should support and reinforce the district behavior code. To be effective, they must be constantly and consistently communicated to members of the school community.

Questions to Guide Development of School Rules

- Do our rules align with and reinforce our core values and beliefs?
- Are our school rules fair and reasonable?
- Can the rules be fairly and equitably applied to all members of the school?
- Are our school rules appropriate for adults as well as students?
- Do our school rules conform to district policy and constitutional requirements?
- Should the policy emphasize punishment or prevention?

As with the development of your overall discipline policy, rules should be kept simple and few in number. Be sure to explain the values behind your rules, especially when someone has violated a rule. Review and reinforce school rules on a regular basis—don't assume that everyone remembers and understands the rules. And finally, as one student told us, "Don't have any stupid rules!" In other words, focus on things that are important rather than the trivial.

Classroom Rules

In addition to school-wide rules, thoughtfully developed classroom rules ensure that teachers are able to maintain a classroom climate that is conductive to good teaching. In some schools, there are a few consistent rules used by all teachers, as well as two or three individual teacher-based ones.

Sample Classroom Policy with Common Rules

Common Rules

- Begin bell work immediately when you enter the room.
- Ask permission to speak or leave your seat.
- Have your materials and supplies ready when the bell rings.

Individual Rules

- Do not touch supplies or equipment until you are told to do so.
- Show respect for the opinions of others.
- Respect the privacy of my desk and work area at all times.

It is most effective when teachers and students work together to develop rules based on values. Also, whenever possible, state rules positively, as the sample classroom rules chart shows. However, there are times when a mandate is more effective, and, in those times, it is appropriate to start with a negative. For example, "Do not touch items that don't belong to you" may be more effective than "Touch only items that belong to you."

A Final Note

Dealing with discipline issues can be frustrating and time-consuming. It can also distract you from your focus on learning. Create policies and procedures that reflect the values in your school and enlist the support of everyone in the school.

Skills for Principals

- Model personal and professional ethics, integrity, justice, and fairness, and expect the same of others.
- Behave in a trustworthy manner, using your influence and authority to enhance the common good.
- Involve families, teachers, and students in developing, implementing, and monitoring guidelines and norms for student behavior.
- Develop and monitor a comprehensive safety and security plan.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

With All Due Respect: Keys for Building Effective School Discipline by Ronald Morrish.

You Know the Fair Rule: Strategies for Positive and Effective Behaviour Management and Discipline in Schools (3rd ed.) by Bill Rogers.

This blog entry describes four early year keys to effective classroom discipline: www.edutopia.org/blog/early-year-effective-classroom-discipline-allen-mendler

This article provides suggestions about effective school-wide discipline policies: www.nasponline.org/resources/principals/Schoolwide_Discipline_NASSP_February2012.pdf

F

Finding the Right People

The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it.

—Theodore Roosevelt

Think About It

What is your experience with hiring personnel? Do you deal with a large turnover in your staff?

Hiring and retaining the right personnel is one of the most important parts of a principal's job. When you have quality staff, your job as a leader is easier. When you have staff members who are uncooperative or ineffective, working with them can drain your time and energy. We're going to look at three aspects of working with personnel: finding the right people, keeping the right people, and finishing with the wrong people.

A New Generation of Teachers

Baby Boomer teachers, who dominated American society for a generation, are rapidly retiring and being replaced by members of a new generation,

referred to as Generation Y, one that holds very different beliefs about work and about the workplace and the way principals work with them (Coggins, 2008).

Characteristics of Gen Y Employees

- Highly educated, value education and attribute their success to education
- Very comfortable using technology and expect it to be available in the workplace
- Tend to be creative, innovative, and self-confident
- Committed to making a difference and contributing to positive social change
- Want to be connected, updated, included, and involved in their work
- Desire relationships with co-workers and supervisors
- Looking for opportunities for growth, challenging work and assignments, and flexibility in work schedules
- Possess collaborative skills, are committed to team building, and are not afraid of accountability

There are several strategies that leaders can use to work well with this new generation of teachers.

Strategies for Working with Generation Y

- Establish shared vision and goals—They want to be involved and participate in setting a vision and identifying specific, measurable goals.
- Provide leadership opportunities—They expect to be involved and to assume responsibility. They will not simply defer to more senior teachers.
- Create a positive, supportive school culture—Celebrate generational diversity and use cross-generational teams to work on curricular and instructional issues.
- Provide sound instructional leadership—They expect in-depth feedback because they want to contribute to the success of your school and expect to receive honest, open, and personalized support from you.
- Embrace technology—This generation is comfortable using technology and will expect to use all forms of technology to improve their work.

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- Use data effectively and often—This generation of teacher is comfortable with accountability and the use of data. They appreciate access to user-friendly data that can be used to improve their work.

Source: Behrstock & Clifford (2009); Rebore & Walmsley (2010)

Finding the Right People

A few years ago, we met with a new principal who was hired to turn around a struggling school. At the end of his first year, 27% of his teachers left, through either retirement or resignation. His superintendent offered to pay his expenses to attend a recruitment fair to find new teachers, but he said he was too busy. If you are too busy to invest time in hiring the best people for your school, you are too busy! If there is a teacher shortage where you are, go out of your area to recruit. Don't settle for less than what is best for your students.

Hiring staff is often guided by district policy. The first thing you want to do is to check with the Human Resource Department about any procedures you must follow. This often includes developing a job description and list of duties.

As you hire, it's important to standardize the hiring process. Following a standard process ensures that you will treat everyone who applies in a uniform manner. Your district may have some of these procedures in place. If not, you will need to create them for your school.

First, develop your selection criteria. Each criterion should be relevant to the work to be performed and should be free of bias, so that everyone is treated the same throughout the process. If you need someone who is bilingual, include that on your list. However, as you plan, differentiate between those skills or characteristics that are required and those that are simply desirable. All criteria must be relevant to the work, but you are likely to have some nonnegotiable items and some that you would like to have. Make sure you have addressed relevant employment law (see chart) and that you always document thoroughly. All criteria should be available for review.

Employment Discrimination Laws

- Age Discrimination in Employment Act (1967): Age discrimination
- Americans with Disabilities Act (1990): Protection for people with disabilities
- Family and Medical Leave Act (1993): Provides leave for family medical needs
- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964): No discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, or national origin
- Pregnancy Discrimination Act (1978): Protects the jobs of women who become pregnant and provides maternity leave

Next, create and use a protocol for interviews. The questions should be linked to your selection criteria, and they should be open-ended to provide in-depth information about the candidate. You might consider questions such as, "What do you see as your strengths related to this position?" "As you think about your past work experience, what has been your biggest challenge?" "Imagine you were offered the position and accepted it, and it is one year later. What was the best part of your first year, and what was your biggest challenge?" After you draft your questions, assess them to be sure you avoid any questions that are unlawful (see checklist).

Checklist for Assessing Interview Protocol

Unlawful Areas of Inquiry	Yes	No
■ Complexion or color of skin. ■ Anything about applicant's religious beliefs, affiliation, church/parish/synagogue, pastor, or religious holidays observed. ■ Applicant's gender, marital status, name or other information of spouse, or ages of children, if any. ■ Whether applicant has a disability or has been treated for any of certain diseases. ■ However, you may ask whether the applicant has any physical impairment that would affect the ability to perform the job for which the applicant has applied.		

(*Continued*)

(*Continued*)

Unlawful Areas of Inquiry	Yes	No
■ Whether the applicant has ever been arrested. You may ask if the applicant has been convicted of a crime. ■ Any previous name that the applicant has used. You may ask whether he or she worked for your organization under a different name (e.g., maiden name). ■ Birthplace or birthplace of applicant's spouse, birth date or certificate of naturalization papers, and so on. May ask if the applicant is a U.S. citizen, intends to become one, or has a legal right to work in the United States. ■ Applicant's photograph before hiring. ■ The applicant's native language. You may ask which languages the applicant speaks and writes. ■ Questions or information about the applicant's relatives. Prior to employment, you may not even ask the name of a person to contact in case of emergency. ■ Clubs, societies, and lodges to which the applicant belongs. You may ask the applicant whether he or she is a member of any organizations believed to be pertinent to the job.		

Finally, follow your process. In some cases, you may realize early in the interview that a person is not the best fit for the job. However, respect the candidate and the process and finish the interview. After you hire someone, be sure to send a written follow-up note to all candidates, notifying them that they did not get the job and thanking them for their interest in the position. A little courtesy goes a long way at this point; it never hurts to be nice, even to those you aren't hiring.

Keeping the Right People

Whether you have hired your own staff or inherited them from a former administrator, you want to keep the right people. Schools are basically

people places, so it is important to nurture and cultivate talented employees and make them feel valued and part of the organization.

Steps to Create a "People-Oriented" Workplace

- See each person as an individual, as unique.
- Provide opportunities for each individual to assume responsibility.
- Remind individuals about the need for strict compliance with rules, but consider exceptions when appropriate.
- Create a place where people seek to learn from the experience and consider other alternatives rather than lay blame when things don't work out.
- Value listening and respecting varied points of view.
- Allow flexibility for people to teach or organize their classrooms in different ways.
- Provide opportunities for leadership to everyone.

As a leader, you have three keys that will help you unlock the door to employee satisfaction: effective communication, engagement in significant tasks, and valuing and respecting different points of view.

Effective Communication

Your first key to employee satisfaction is your ability to communicate effectively with your employees. When communicating, focus more energy on listening than speaking. Remember that much communication occurs through body language, so be attentive to nonverbal cues about meaning. Be aware of any power relationship (supervisor–supervisee, evaluator–evaluatee) that may be influencing the situation. Throughout the conversation, ask clarifying questions and probe for deeper meaning in response to any comments. Overall, focus on mutual problem solving and look for win–win solutions. And always identify next steps for each person, which will clarify each person's responsibilities.

Engagement in Significant Tasks

Next, quality employees are more likely to be satisfied if they are engaged in significant tasks. Identify meaningful ways to involve employees in school

decision making rather than involving them in trivial decisions, such as the location of a copier. For all tasks, be clear in defining the task, the desired or required timeline, and any resources that will be provided.

Valuing and Respecting Different Points of View

Another key to retaining employees is your choice to respect points of view that differ from your own. Make it clear that you value freedom of expression and reinforce that in every aspect of your job. When hearing unpleasant news, rather than reacting defensively, be open and probe for understanding by asking clarifying questions. Structure meetings and other activities to model openness, and use a decision-making process that requires exploration of alternatives and an analysis of advantages and disadvantages. Activities such as these will reinforce for your employees that you are open to differing perspectives.

Finishing With the Wrong People

Despite your best efforts, sometimes you will end up with the wrong person in a job. If you have tried to work with that person to become more effective, and it is still evident that you need a change, you have the uncomfortable job of terminating a person's employment.

Most Frequent Reasons for Dismissal

Inadequate performance: Relates to teaching skill, including classroom management

Immorality: Personal lifestyle issues or conviction on a felony

Insubordination: Failure to do what one is supposed to do; courts say that it must involve repeated acts in order to qualify for dismissal

Neglect of duty: Not being at an assigned place, particularly not supervising students or leaving students in a potentially dangerous situation

You will never enjoy this part of your job, but there are several things you can do to make this task easier.

Key Administrative Actions When Considering Dismissal

First, always keep your supervisor and the Human Resources Department informed. Follow any guidelines provided by the district. There are often legal requirements from either state law or the local contract that describe the process to be followed. Then, document everything, including all correspondence, classroom visits, and observations. Next, provide notice to the person about what needs to be changed or why you are recommending his or her dismissal. Be explicit in letting the employee know what he or she did not do and what needs to improve. The notice must be in writing, and you will want a record that the notice was provided. Allow time for the employee to improve. Provide the opportunity and time for the employee to modify his or her behavior in cases that do not involve immorality. Also, provide resources to support improvement. Generally, courts want to see that principals are working to support the improvement of performance and to give the employee resources he or she may need to improve, such as professional development, materials, or a peer coach. Finally, stay focused on the person's actions rather than allowing a negative person to drag you into a personal argument.

Reasons Principals Lose Dismissal Cases

- The principal did not adequately document the case.
- The policy that the staff member supposedly violated did not exist in writing.
- The policy was ignored in other instances.
- The principal was not clear enough in staff evaluations. For example, the principal failed to label the employee's performance as unsatisfactory.
- The principal acted before all due process requirements were met.
- There is evidence that the administrator tried to intimidate the employee into resigning or retiring.

A Final Note

Ideally, you have the right people in place in every aspect of your organization. Focus your efforts on hiring and keeping the right people, but when you have a mismatch, finish with the wrong person in a way that is legal, while preserving the dignity of everyone involved.

Skills for Principals

- Select and hire teachers and other staff who support the school's mission.
- Set appropriate performance standards for teachers and other staff.
- Understand the legal parameters for hiring and nonrenewal of teachers and other staff.
- Follow the school, district, or state evaluation system.
- Provide professional development and other resources to support the improvement of staff performance.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

Recruiting and Retaining Generation Y Teachers by Ronald Rebore and Angela Walmsley.

Hire Better Teachers Now: Using the Science of Selection to Find the Best Teachers for Your School (Harvard Education Letter Impact Series) by Dale S. Rose, Andrew English, and Treena Gillespie Finney.

This research report discusses how urban principals find and hire teachers: www.aefpweb.org/sites/default/files/webform/HiringDecisions_AEFP.pdf

This publication provides tips for working with Generation Y teachers: www.tqsource.org/publications/February2009Brief.pdf

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G

Grading and Assessment

In the best classrooms, grades are only one of many types of feedback provided to students.

—Douglas B. Reeves

Think About It

How do the various stakeholders in your school feel about grades?

Grades are one of the most visible aspects of learning in schools. However, as you provide leadership to improve student learning, we must first consider the use of formative assessment. Then, we will turn our attention to grading policies.

Formative Assessment

With formative assessment, we continually assess student learning and use that information to plan future instruction. In 1998, Black and William provided a clear rationale that using formative assessment effectively raises standards. In 2004, they and other researchers provided a fuller explanation of formative assessment in *Working Inside the Black Box: Assessment for Learning in the Classroom.*

Assessment for learning is any assessment for which the first priority in its design and practice is to serve the purpose of promoting pupils' learning. It thus differs from assessment designed primarily to serve the purposes of accountability or of ranking or of certifying competence. An assessment activity can help learning if it provides information to be used as feedback, by teachers, and by their pupils, in assessing themselves and each other, to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & William, 2004).

Formative assessments include questioning, exit slips, observations, reflective logs, graphic organizers, electronic response systems, or think-pair-share. This compares to summative assessments, such as projects and tests, that are typically used for grading.

Formative and Summative Assessments Compared

Formative Assessment	Summative Assessment
■ Student is aware of the questions throughout the assessment process. ■ Timing is flexible. ■ Teacher's feedback is commentary and/or letter or number grade. ■ Evaluation is used to guide future learning. ■ Considers the student's zone of proximal development. ■ Test or task may be flexible. ■ Student is involved in self-assessment. ■ Sets reachable targets for future learning. ■ Results are not used as a report card grade.	■ Questions on a test are surprises to the student. ■ Student must perform within time limits. ■ Teacher's feedback is a letter or number grade. ■ Evaluation is used to rank and sort students. ■ Does not consider the student as an individual learner. ■ Test or task is not flexible. ■ Assessment by teacher or outside agency only. ■ No direct follow-up; when it's over, it's over. ■ Results figure in to the report card grade.

Grading

Formative assessment is critical. So is evaluation or summative assessment. In *Developing Grading and Reporting Systems for Student Learning* (2001, p. 51), Thomas R. Guskey and Jane M. Bailey describe six major purposes of grading and reporting:

1. Communicate achievement status
2. Provide information students can use for self-evaluation
3. Select, identify, or group students
4. Provide incentives for students to learn
5. Evaluate effectiveness of instructional programs
6. Provide evidence of students' lack of effort or responsibility

Each of these purposes is acceptable, but often we don't think about why we use grades. We simply assume that grades exist for a reason, and we may not challenge something that is accepted as the norm. One of the first steps you can take as a school leader is to initiate a conversation about the purposes of grading in your school.

Grading can be controversial. Concerns about grade inflation, an overemphasis on grades rather than learning, or incidents of cheating can negatively affect your school culture. However, there are ways to minimize the negative aspects of grading.

Minimizing the Negative Aspects of Grading

- Recognize the value of grading to students, parents, and others.
- Shift the emphasis to learning.
- Provide clear guidelines.
- Require quality work.
- Communicate clearly.
- Be patient.

Recognize Value

First, recognize why grades are valued. Some students want good grades because they are looking for outside affirmation that they are worthy. Others need a high grade point average for college admission or scholarships. Still others enjoy the competition of comparing themselves to others. Understanding why a student or parent is concerned about grading will help you and your teachers communicate more effectively.

Shift the Emphasis

Next, shift the emphasis to learning as opposed to grades. This takes time with teachers, students, and parents. However, the more you use formative

assessment, the more you emphasize learning. One of the quickest and most effective methods we've used for minimizing a focus on grades is to have a large number of grades. That may seem counterintuitive, but when students receive a final grade based on one or two big items, such as tests or projects, it heightens anxiety. When a student has a larger number and wide variety of opportunities to demonstrate understanding, one bad grade does not matter as much. It's a choice of making every grade high stakes versus giving students multiple opportunities to succeed. Encouraging your teachers to use a wider range of assessments and grades supports higher levels of learning.

Provide Clear Guidelines

It's also important to provide students with clear guidelines and a detailed rubric for all projects and key assignments. This supports your goal of clear communication with all stakeholders.

Require Quality Work

Next, as the quotation opening this chapter points out, we should require that all students complete work at an acceptable level. Many of our graduate students work in school systems that do not allow zeroes. The purpose of that policy is to keep students from falling so far behind that they can never catch up. In some cases, teachers are directed to assign a minimal grade, such as a 60, rather than assigning a zero. That can send mixed messages to students and create resistance from teachers. Bob Heath, former principal of Sullivan Middle School, collaborated with his teachers to find an alternative:

> What we have discovered here is that just teaching more isn't what raises the bar. It's making kids do the work that they are hesitating or refusing to do. We created more time in our daily schedule for students to get face-to-face with teachers to complete that work. If they don't turn something in, they meet with that teacher to do the assignment. They are not going to get away with just not doing it. We have to break the cycle of passive resistance a lot of kids have toward doing work. It's developed over years but we have to say "No." We are going to make you do the work. We will not just give you a 60. We will make you do the work to earn the authentic grade. Bob's suggestions are excellent, but they are working in part because it is a school-wide expectation that all students will complete work at an acceptable level.

Communicate Clearly

Provide clear communication about grades and grading policies. Ideally, teachers will meet together by grade levels, teams, or departments to agree on consistent grading policies. If homework "counts," students and parents need to know that. Ms. Keith, for example, does not grade homework, but if a student neglects to turn it in, she takes points off the final grade. She believes that students need to do homework for the sake of learning, and then their grades on tests will be higher because of the homework. That is fine, but she never told her students. When Jorge received a C, despite test grades that averaged to a B, his parents called to question the overall grade. They finally understood but commented to the principal, "It would have been okay if we had just known." The last thing you want to hear from a student or a parent is, "If I had just known . . . "

You may choose to require all teachers to provide a written grading policy. This does not mean you must dictate the terms of the policy. Teachers should have that choice. However, it is reasonable and prudent to call for all teachers to have a written explanation of what and how they grade and to provide reminders to students of the policies.

Sample Grading Policy Components

- Description of types of assessments (tests, projects, homework, etc.)
- Description of weight of assessments (percentage of grade, etc.)
- Overall expectations for completion (e.g., "not yet" policy for projects)
- Procedures for makeup work (when student is absent)
- Opportunities for extra help (regularly scheduled days and times)

Be Patient

Finally, be patient. Discussions or change initiatives related to grades can be controversial. It seems as though grading is the last great barrier of freedom for teachers. However, grades are an outward reflection of what you and your faculty believe about learning. It is important to consider what that means to your staff and what changes are necessary. And, although teachers want and need some flexibility, it's important to be consistent on major facets of grading. If your initial attempt to discuss grading doesn't go as smoothly as you would like, take time to reflect and readjust rather than giving up.

General Principles

There is not an ideal grading policy. Grading policies and procedures must be tailored to your school community. Variations are needed depending on the grade levels served, your school's philosophy on assessment and evaluation, and stakeholders' perspectives on grading. However, as you lead teachers in considering grading policies, there are general principles to consider:

Principles for Evaluation and Grading

- Use a variety of assessments.
- Make sure the type of assessment matches your purpose.
- Clearly explain what you are evaluating and the purpose of the evaluation.
- Create and provide explicit guidelines for grading.
- Build in opportunities for students to succeed.

A Final Note

Assessment and grades make an impact on student learning. It is important to consider how they reflect the philosophy and culture of your school. Balancing the use of formative assessment to inform instruction with authentic grading policies will have a positive impact on your students.

Skills for Principals

- Develop and use aligned, standards-based accountability data to improve teaching and learning.
- Work with teachers to identify multiple sources of information about teaching and learning.
- Ensure that grading and assessment strategies do not promote inequitable curricular or instructional practices.
- Communicate with families and caregivers about grading and other assessment systems.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

Grading Smarter, Not Harder by Myron Dueck.

On Your Mark: Challenging the Conventions of Grading and Reporting by Thomas R. Guskey.

This article describes five obstacles to grading reform: www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/nov11/vol69/num03/Five-Obstacles-to-Grading-Reform.aspx

This article describes how to start a conversation with teachers about grading: www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/nov11/vol69/num03/Starting-the-Conversation-About-Grading.aspx

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H

How to Impact School Culture

The heart and soul of school culture is what people believe, the assumptions they make about how school works.

—Thomas Sergiovanni

Think About It

What is the perception of the culture at your school? Does everyone (teachers, administrators, parents, students) perceive it in the same way?

How would you define school culture? It's a rather vague concept, isn't it? Some talk about culture as the overall feeling about a school or the perception of the school, but that is really more the climate of a school.

Climate or Culture

School climate and school culture are distinct. The climate of a school reflects the "feeling or tone" of the school, the relationships among personnel, and the morale of the setting.

Culture reflects a more complex set of values, traditions, and patterns of behavior that are present in a school. The culture is indicative of deeply

embedded beliefs about schooling. Culture reveals itself in "the unwritten rules and assumptions, the combination of rituals and traditions, the array of symbols and artifacts, the special language and phrasing that staff and students use, the expectations for change and learning" (Peterson & Deal, 2002).

Culture reflects the unspoken norms about school operations and is transmitted from generation to generation, often by the influential staff whom others recognize as informal leaders and opinion leaders. As we consider school culture and your role in influencing that culture, Bolman and Deal (2013) provide a model for understanding the factors that contribute to culture. It is based on the idea that organizations are cultures and reflect underlying values, which are patterns of shared basic assumptions. These assumptions are often taught to new members of the culture—whether teachers, students, or parents—as the "correct" way to act, think, perceive, and feel.

Principals can impact the school culture by using these symbols to promote institutional values and the school's core mission. Most importantly, principals need to understand the power of these symbols to telegraph messages about what is important.

Ways Culture Manifests Itself

- **Rituals and ceremonies** provide structure to our daily life and to the routine of a school. Rituals occur routinely, whereas ceremonies are grander, less frequent events (graduation). Both rituals and ceremonies reflect values in their structure and priority, and they carry meaning about what is valued and what is important.
- **Heroes and heroines** are those people whom we look up to as reflecting the organization's values—people who are examples of living those values.
- **Stories and tales** are recollections of events that are told and retold and play a powerful role in sharing examples of organizational values. Stories often contain a moral and are inevitably engaging.
- **Rewards and reinforcements** reflect those things that are valued and therefore rewarded. Is it creativity in the classroom or compliance with established patterns? Is it waiving a rule so that a student may be successful or adhering to established policy?

How is each of these evidenced in your school? Who are the heroes and heroines? What are the important stories that are told to newcomers? What is the reward system—both formal and informal?

School Culture Guiding Questions

Cultural Factors	
Rituals and ceremonies	■ Does your school have a set of rituals and routines that communicate your values about student learning? ■ Are there special events that demonstrate your school's mission and vision?
Heroes and heroines	■ How do you recognize and celebrate people who contribute to the success of every student? ■ What ways do you use to recognize students and teachers who exemplify commitment to your school's mission?
Stories and tales	■ What stories do you tell about your school, students, and staff? ■ What do you say to share your commitment to your school's mission?
Rewards and Reinforcements	■ Do you routinely reward students and teachers who do things that support your school's mission? ■ How do you recognize and reward people for their work?

Culture and School Improvement

A school is a complex setting and reflects the prevailing beliefs and attitudes of the people who work there. Those individuals are shaped by their own personal set of beliefs about schooling, students, and how students learn. Those beliefs reflect the individual's set of experiences, the community where they live, and the people they've encountered.

If people believe that school is a pathway to success, they will advocate for programs that support that belief. On the other hand, if they believe schools should only reward success, they will advocate for a different set of programs.

Leadership 101: What a Principal Pays Attention to Becomes Important

Principals can impact their school's culture by being attentive to the things they do. Teachers, students, and families notice what a principal pays attention to, and the things you value become readily apparent. The culture of your school doesn't change by mandating a change, but it can change every day as you model behaviors that reinforce your beliefs.

Here are some ways that a principal can influence the culture of their school:

Ways to Influence Culture

- Develop a set of stories about student and teacher success. Use every opportunity to share those stories with teachers, families, and community.
- Think about how you spend time during each day. Maximize the time you spend in classrooms and find time to talk with teachers about their instruction.
- Value being part of professional development by attending with your teachers. Join book study groups, attend team meetings, look at student work.
- Review the use of your school's budget. Assure that the budget supports the school vision and does not simply follow past practice.
- Consider how teachers, staff, and students are recognized. Make sure recognitions are authentic and support your school's mission and vision.

An Example of Culture: Beginning and Ending the Year

Among the most important rituals in a school are the ways in which the year begins and ends. Successful principals recognize the power of rituals to shape school culture.

Beginnings Set the Tone

The start of a school year is an ideal time to shape or reinforce the culture of your school. For most stakeholders, the new year is exciting. It is filled with both the promise of a new beginning and the nervous anticipation of

that start. Your job is twofold: to help everyone feel safe and secure as they anticipate the year and to set a tone that reflects your vision for the future. At the beginning of every school year at one Michigan high school, for example, faculty, staff, and tenth-, eleventh-, and twelfth-grade students lined the hallway and clapped as incoming ninth graders entered the building for the first time. Another school posted the name and picture of every new student in the main entrance to the school.

Activities Prior to the Opening of School

- Send a welcome letter to staff with information about assignment, rooms, student rosters (if possible).
- Permit teachers to get into their rooms and prepare for the opening of school.
- Distribute supplies to teacher rooms.
- Involve teachers and staff in developing plans for opening day activities.
- Provide a time for parents and students to visit the school, particularly new families.
- If you have a number of parents who speak a language other than English, prepare school registration and information materials in their native language (most often Spanish).

It's also important to celebrate the first day of school. You might identify a theme and then use that throughout the school year to keep everyone focused. A Michigan principal used "Results" as the theme one year. Every teacher received a copy of *Results Now* by Mike Schmoker (2006) and was invited to read it over the summer.

Opening Day Activities for Staff

- Recognize that teachers want to work in their rooms and prepare for the arrival of students.
- Ensure that opening day is upbeat and positive.
- Provide food.
- Model good instructional practices during any meetings.
- Rather than scheduling additional meetings, use an alternative means for making announcements (e-mail, newsletter).

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- Use upbeat and positive stories to set the tone for the year. A principal in Tempe, Arizona, used "Turn Around" stories to provide examples of students who had made significant changes in their academic performance. The school had a history of low achievement, and staff were concerned that it was difficult to make achievement gains with students.

Of course, don't forget to plan opening day activities for parents and students. Be sure that lots of helpful adults are available to assist students and their families in locating classrooms, lockers, and so on. Have plenty of directional signs, clearly posted in the languages of your student population. Be sure that every student is scheduled and assigned to a teacher; one of the worst nightmares for a student and parent is to sit in the office on the first day of school, knowing they don't really "belong." Finally, encourage your staff to smile. For anyone walking in the door, it makes a difference to feel welcome!

Endings Leave a Mark

The end of the school year provides an opportunity to celebrate success and to lay the groundwork for the next school year. A principal in South Carolina told us, "No matter how tired we are, we take time to celebrate the year and look forward to the next year." Ultimately, people remember how something ended, so use that time to your advantage.

Remember to identify and celebrate academic and social successes and share them with staff and parents. This builds confidence that the work of teachers and parents makes a difference. A high school principal in Tacoma, Washington, took photos of classroom and student activities throughout the year. The school's Photography Club turned the photos into a collection of posters that were placed in the lobby, the cafeteria, and the hallways of the school to celebrate the year. The principal remarked, "Students like these photos. They spend lots of time looking at them and recalling the year. Rather than acting out, it ends the year on a much more positive tone."

Prior to the end of the year, review data about the current year (achievement data, climate data, satisfaction data) with the School Improvement Team and identify goals and strategies for the coming year. Based on this plan, identify a theme for the coming year. The school in Michigan adopted a second-year theme of "Even Greater Results" that built on the prior theme of "Results." Be sure to schedule a time and/or means to share with families

the success of the year and discuss the goals for the coming year. This helps build their continued ownership. Finally, arrange an end-of-the-year activity with staff to celebrate successes. One school in Ohio, for example, always had a faculty potluck at lunchtime on the last day, as it is an early-release day for students. It provides a time to socialize, build camaraderie, and celebrate.

A Final Note

The culture of your school is a reflection of the beliefs of those who work and visit. Planning rituals and ceremonies can be time-consuming, but the results are worth it. School culture affects all facets of your work. Invest in it.

Skills for Principals

- Nurture and sustain a trusting, collaborative work environment.
- Recognize the powerful role of school practices to shape school culture.
- Understand the importance of symbolic activities at the beginning and end of the school year to convey the school's values.
- Plan opening and closing activities that provide time to reflect on and celebrate the school's accomplishments.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

School Culture Rewired: How to Define, Assess, and Transform It by Steve Gruenert and Todd Whitaker.

Creating Cultures of Thinking: The 8 Forces We Must Master to Truly Transform Our Schools by Ron Richart.

This blog entry contains tips for having conversations about school culture: www.teachingquality.org/content/blogs/bill-ferriter/transforming-school-culture-conversation-tips

In this video, Dr. Anthony Muhammad discusses school culture: www.teachertube.com/video/transforming-school-culture-250291

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1

Instructional Leadership

I have witnessed how education opens doors, and I know that when sound instruction takes place, students experience the joys of new-found knowledge and the ability to excel.

—Daniel Akaka

Think About It

How much of your time is allocated for instruction? What is the most pressing instructional issue in your school?

The responsibility for improving instructional quality resides with school principals. Many principals, because of the size or complexity of their schools, find it a challenge to allocate the time to work with their staff, but improving instruction is a key function of school leaders. A recent study found that, on average, principals spend just 12.6% of their time on activities related to instruction, much less than on management or student activities. Among instructional activities, the most frequent activity was conducting classroom walkthroughs (5.4%) followed by formal teacher evaluation (2.4%) (Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013).

The principal plays an important role in creating a climate in which conversations about instructional effectiveness are common and part of the everyday operation of the school. There are many ways that principals can focus on improving instruction. Most involve establishing ways for teachers to work collaboratively and to have conversations about student learning and about their teaching.

The Principal as Instructional Leader

Given the limited time principals devote to instructional leadership, it is important that they use their time wisely and focus on tasks that are linked to improved student achievement. Principals who created systems for more prolonged engagement with teachers on curriculum development and instructional design were more likely to impact student outcomes (Grissom et al., 2013; May, Huff, & Goldring, 2012).

There are four things you can do to focus on being an instructional leader:

1. Embrace Your Instructional Role

Creating a culture characterized by collaborative work between a principal and teachers is particularly challenging with the emphasis on disciplinary content and the standards that guide content area instruction. Principals simply cannot know enough about all of the subjects to operate as a hands-on participant in the process. But a principal can serve as a catalyst for collaboration between teachers and between the principal and teachers. Central to that instructional leadership role is creating opportunities for all teachers to interact and learn from one other (Blasé & Blasé, 2004; Marshall, 2013; Sullivan & Glanz, 2013).

A focus on instructional leadership requires a principal to embrace roles often not associated with the principalship. The most successful instructional leaders are comfortable facilitating conversations about teaching and learning, recognize the importance of being a learner and promoting learning among their teachers, and understand the importance of participating, along with their teachers, in the work to improve instruction. They abandon the traditional position of authority and recognize that their role must include that of "learner," working with teachers and other school staff to investigate and seek solutions that will improve student learning (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013).

Shift in Instructional Leadership

From . . .	Toward . . .
■ Solitary Decision-maker ■ Expert ■ Director ■ Dominating Leader	■ Participant in Learning Process ■ Learner ■ Facilitator ■ Participating Leader

2. Create a School Culture That Supports Professional Learning

Effective instructional leaders recognize the importance of nurturing a school culture supportive of professional learning. They understand that there are significant differences between a novice teacher in the first year of his or her career and a veteran teacher who has been recognized for his or her skilled instruction and they know that their interaction with that teacher can either promote or inhibit professional learning in their school. We share ideas about specific professional learning strategies in Chapter P: Professional Learning Facilitates Growth.

The Effective Instructional Leader . . .

- Understands that teachers are adults and respond well to the principles of adult learning
- Recognizes that all teachers are not at the same stage of their career and should not be treated alike
- Supports the needs of teachers at different stages of their career cycle
- Helps teachers to understand and learn from their teaching and from career events
- Accommodates the varied roles of teachers
- Considers the sociocultural context of teaching
- Is empowering and motivating

Adapted from: Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon (2013)

Many teachers perceive supervision to not be helpful. That's because it is often directive and focused on problems (Blasé & Blasé, 2004). But

when supervision is constructive and interactive, the response is quite different (Grissom et al., 2013). When leaders engage teachers in supervisory conversations that focus on meaningful learning, they are construed to be supportive and "skillful" instructional leaders (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013).

Principals who are the most effective instructional leaders work collaboratively with teachers to support the integration of reflective practice and professional learning into school practices. Successful instructional leaders:

- Acknowledge the difficulties of growing and changing, including the natural resistance to change and the risk taking that is involved.
- Talk openly and frequently with teachers about instruction, make suggestions, give feedback, and solicit teachers' advice and opinions about classroom instruction.
- Develop cooperative, nonthreatening partnerships with teachers and promote group development that is characterized by trust, openness, and freedom to make mistakes.
- Model effective teaching skills when working with their staff.
- Support development of coaching skills and reflective conversations among educators.
- Apply the principles of adult learning to staff development programs (Blasé & Blasé, 2000).

3. Develop Communication Skills

Talking with a teacher about their teaching, as well as coaching teachers, is the key to effective supervision. Understanding the principles of effective communication is essential. Skillful leaders develop a repertoire of approaches to promote reflection, seek clarification, and support professional growth. The most skillful separate their "own perceptions from the teacher's without accusing or putting the other person on the defensive" (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013). Skillful leaders use several effective communication techniques:

Effective Communication Techniques

- They listen attentively and acknowledge what the teacher is saying. For example, you could say things like "Tell me more," "I understand," or "I'm following you."

(*Continued*)

(*Continued*)

- They use nonverbal cues to show they're engaged. For example, you should provide affirmative nods, keep your arms open rather than closed, maintain eye contact, face the speaker, and use a barrier-free space rather than across the desk.
- They provide an opportunity for reflecting and clarifying. Some prompts you might use are "So, you would like . . . ," "I think you're saying . . . ," or "You feel . . . because . . . "

Skillful leaders avoid creating barriers to effective communication:

Avoiding Barriers to Effective Communication

- They don't judge a person's motives by criticizing, labeling, or diagnosing. Instead, they listen and seek clarification. For example, don't say "The lesson was poor . . . " or "With more experience you'll . . . "
- They don't offer solutions by lecturing, ordering, threatening, or suggesting. For example, don't say "What I would do is . . . " or "If you don't . . . "
- They don't avoid the teacher's concerns by diverting the conversation, using sarcasm, or reassuring them inappropriately. For example, don't say "It's not so bad . . . ," "I'm busy and can't talk right now . . . ," or "Speaking of . . . "

Teachers value and respond to coaching and other opportunities to reflect on their own teaching. This collaborative approach engages teachers but, at the same time, doesn't reward less skillful teaching. Teachers value the chance to work with their principal and/or other teachers to analyze their instruction and develop plans for strengthening their practice (Grissom et al., 2013; May et al., 2012).

Similarly, teachers crave feedback and an opportunity to reflect on their work. Rather than resisting supervision, they seek authentic risk-free opportunities to talk about their teaching and to grow professionally (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013).

4. Become a Powerful Coach

Principals hold two distinct roles—evaluator and coach. While evaluation is necessary, there is increasing recognition of the importance of coaching. This takes on greater urgency when the evidence is that coaching, along

with other forms of instructional leadership, is related to improved student outcomes. The principal, rather than being the expert and telling a teacher what to do, serves as the "lead coach" responsible for engaging teachers in a process that respects them as learners and works with them to reflect on their teaching and identify ways to strengthen their practice. When principals serve as coaches, it is critical that the two roles remain separate and that clear boundaries be established about how information from coaching will be used. The evidence is that teachers are able to separate the roles (May et al., 2012).

The primary role of the coach is to ask questions that are open-ended and promote cognition. Listening, probing for deeper meaning, and being nonjudgmental are critical skills. Good coaching is built on a foundation of trust. It occurs when the coach creates an open, respectful, and inviting setting. Coaching cannot be forced. Good coaches share several traits:

Traits of Effective Coaches

- **They Enroll Teachers—**Coaching cannot be seen as punishment or as a requirement. Good coaches create a setting that welcomes teachers and in which teachers choose to participate.
- **They Identify Teacher Goals—**A top-down approach rarely works. Good coaches help teachers identify goals for their work and support the teacher's efforts to improve.
- **They Listen—**Perhaps no other skill is as important as the ability to listen intently to those being coached. Good coaches create a setting where teachers feel comfortable, can be candid without fear of retribution, and are curious and inquisitive.
- **They Ask Thoughtful Questions—**Good coaches ask thoughtful, open-ended questions that promote reflection. They are interested in promoting teacher cognition rather than providing answers.
- **They Provide Feedback—**Good coaches don't provide feedback in the traditional sense. They don't tell teachers what to do. But they are comfortable using data from an observation, or comments made by the teacher, to provide feedback. All feedback is precise and nonjudgmental. Good coaches are always open to the teacher's point of view. (Garmston & Wellman, 2013; Hirsch & Killion, 2007)

A Three-Step Coaching Model

The coaching process generally involves three phases—planning, observation, and analysis and reflection. Much like the clinical supervision model,

the approach is designed to engage the teacher in reflecting on their teaching, a formative process (Williamson & Blackburn, 2009).

Step 1: Planning—During this step, the teacher and coach meet to discuss the coaching, identify a focus for data collection, and agree on when an observation will occur.

Step 2: Observation/Data Collection—This step includes a visit to the classroom and collection of data that will inform a discussion about the focus area identified in the planning phase.

Step 3: Analysis and Reflection—This phase provides an opportunity to meet with the teacher to talk about the observation and the data that were collected. The emphasis is on engaging the teacher in a conversation to analyze and think about his or her teaching. Conclude with agreement on follow up and appropriate next steps.

Conditions for Successful Coaching

The conditions that support effective coaching include

- Presume positive intentions.
- Talk with the teacher to identify a focus for the work. Assume the teacher can analyze and reflect on their teaching and identify an area for growth.
- Ask clarifying questions to understand the context (students, content, prior learning), the lesson, and the teacher's thinking about the design and delivery of the lesson.
- Remain nonjudgmental.
- Listen attentively and authentically; use paraphrasing to indicate that you are listening and understand what was said.
- Focus the work on an area identified with the teacher. (Garmston & Wellman, 2013)

Strategically Focus on Instruction

There are four specific strategies that you can use to focus your school on instructional improvement.

Four Strategies

- Talk about what you want to become important.
- Tell stories about improvement.
- Focus the conversation.
- Use staff meetings differently.

First, *what principals talk about becomes important.* Principals who introduce the idea of improving instruction into their day-to-day conversation with teachers find that it subtly sends a message to teachers about the importance of instruction.

During conferences with teachers following classroom observations, a principal from suburban Hartford asked questions such as, "When you design a lesson, what things to do think about? What data about your students' prior learning do you use to guide your lesson design?" Such questions suggest that teachers should be thoughtful in their planning. Rather than "telling" teachers to do this, the message is conveyed through these structured conversations.

Second, *tell stories about improvement.* A principal in suburban Phoenix told "turn around" stories that described significant changes that occurred in the learning of an individual student. In each case, he linked the students' success to the efforts of a specific teacher who either had changed his or her instruction or had gone "over and above" to help the student learn.

Third, *focus the conversation.* At the end of one school year, an elementary school principal gave every teacher a copy of *Classroom Instruction from A to Z* (2007). She invited them to read it over the summer and to return in the fall ready to share and use their learning. On the day teachers returned, they organized into study groups of those who had read the book and talked about its implications for their work. Throughout the year, teachers chose one chapter and shared during a faculty meeting how they had implemented the strategies.

Fourth, *use staff meetings differently.* A principal in Oregon converted monthly staff meetings into an opportunity for professional development. Working with the School Improvement Team, he identified topics of interest, located print and online resources, established faculty study teams, and used the time formerly devoted to staff meetings as a time for the groups to meet, develop plans, and prepare their recommendations to the entire staff. After a few months, the groups began to meet on their own at lunch and before

or after school. He reported that they were "as enthusiastic as I've ever seen them about school improvement."

Close the Achievement Gap

We cannot conclude our discussion of instructional leadership without addressing one of our most critical challenges: closing the achievement gap. There are two reasons that principals should lead the charge to close the achievement gap. First, it is the right thing to do. Every single child who enters our building deserves the right to learn and have the opportunity to succeed. Second, we are held accountable for closing the gap by the No Child Left Behind Act and by state achievement initiatives.

In *Closing the Achievement Gap: A Vision for Changing Beliefs and Practices* (2003), Belinda Williams identified four needs of students:

Needs of Students

1. Access to challenging curriculum and instruction
2. High-quality teachers
3. High expectations
4. Extra support

The needs are clear; the challenge is how to respond.

Provide a Rigorous Learning Environment

Those needs are best met when you and your faculty provide students with a rigorous learning environment. Let us be clear about our definition of rigor. First, center your attention on quality, not quantity. Rigor is not about increasing the number of homework problems assigned. True rigor does more with less, preferring depth over breadth. Next, rigor is not just for your advanced students. Rigor is for every student in your building. That includes your students who are at risk of failure, your students with special needs, and your students for whom English is not their native language. Finally, the heart of authentic rigor is learning, not punishment. It is about growth and success, not failure. Your focus should be on how you can inspire your teachers to lead their students to higher levels of rigor in a positive, productive manner through expectations, support, and instruction.

Definition of Rigor

> "Rigor is creating an environment in which each student is expected to learn at high levels, each student is supported so he or she can learn at high levels, and each student demonstrates learning at high levels." (Blackburn, 2008)

Provide a Personalized Learning Environment

It is important that students feel connected to their school. There is strong evidence that when a student has a supportive relationship with a single adult in school, he or she is more likely to stay in school and to achieve at higher levels.

In elementary school, the classroom teacher often serves that function. In many middle and high schools, an advisory or advocacy program is often included. Typically, the program consists of a small group of students assigned to one teacher who monitors their progress in school and talks with them about academic and social issues.

Some schools create a more personalized environment by organizing into smaller units. In Chapter Z: Zero in on Your Schedule, we discuss how one elementary school organized classrooms into multi-grade wings. Many middle schools organize into interdisciplinary teams in which every teacher on a team teaches the same students. The teachers work together to create a learning environment that is supportive of their students.

Many large high schools are adopting a small "school-within-a-school" model. Students and teachers are organized into small units, often built on a curricular theme. The goal is to create a more personalized setting in which students are well known by teachers and to develop a supportive connection with school. Often support staff such as school counselors and assistant principals are assigned to each small school.

These organizational models simply create the potential for a more personalized environment. It is essential that teachers get to know their students well and commit to building personal relationships with each student.

Hire and Retain Quality Teachers

There are endless suggestions for closing achievement gaps and increasing rigor in schools. Given these challenges, where do you start? Begin by

hiring only the most skilled teachers (see Chapter F: Finding the Right People). Evaluate and work with those teachers who are less skillful (see Chapter Q: Quality Teacher Evaluation).

Work with staff through professional development (see Chapter P: Professional Learning Facilitates Growth and Chapter W: Working Together for the Future) to identify high expectations and to change behavior so that words and actions convey those expectations. Also, work with teachers and district staff to modify curriculum and improve instructional expertise focused on adding rigor and challenge to the program.

Collaborate with community partners to secure additional resources to support the instructional program and before- and after-school programs for students. Commit to co-curricular programs that support the academic needs of students, and provide support activities that enhance the academic rigor of the school's program. This might include organizing academic games or restructuring the schedule to allow for required remediation or tutoring during the regular school day.

A Final Note

It is easy to get caught up in the endless stream of issues related to school management. However, providing leadership for effective instruction is critical and must take priority. Additionally, creating a rigorous learning environment for all students is important and will help close the achievement gap.

Skills for Principals

- Develop a shared vision of high performance for every student.
- Mobilize staff to achieve the school's vision.
- Work to develop a coherent and rigorous curriculum.
- Create a personalized, motivating, and engaging learning environment for every student.
- Provide appropriate instructional supervision.
- Develop the instructional capacity of teachers and other staff.
- Utilize assessment and accountability systems to monitor student progress.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

Evaluating Instructional Leadership: Recognized Practices for Success by Julie and Raymond Smith.

Never Underestimate Your Teachers: Instructional Leadership for Excellence in Every Classroom by Robyn Jackson.

This article describes the four instructional leadership strategies principals need: http://education.cu-portland.edu/blog/ed-leadership/four-instructional-leadership-skills-principals-need/

This article discusses benefits of instructional coaching and provides useful tips for principals: www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2011/02/15/tln_coaching.html

J

Juggling Social Media

Social media is the ultimate equalizer. It gives a voice and a platform to anyone willing to engage.

—Amy Jo Martin

Think About It

How do use social media in your work?

It's easy to dismiss social media as a fascination of young people, but to do so minimizes one of the fastest growing trends in technology. The Pew Internet and American Life Project recently found that 75% of teens have access to a smartphone and only 12% have no cell phone (Lenhart, 2015). The same study found that 92% of teens report being online every day and another found that 75% of their parents use social media regularly (Duggan, Lenhart, Lampe, & Ellison, 2015). Social media tools have become the way for a school or business to disseminate information quickly and efficiently. Because of the almost universal access to social media across all demographic groups, it often reaches people that traditional forms of communication miss.

Seven Reasons to Pay Attention to Social Media

1. **It Builds Relationships—**Creating relationships is important for leaders, and social media is a new, and very effective, way to build support among your stakeholders.
2. **It's About Customers—**Parents and employees often come from a different generation, one that wants to work differently and to be involved in the educational process. Social media is a way to engage them in the life of your school.
3. **They're Already Talking—**Check out the Internet and other online sites. People are already commenting about your school and about your leadership.
4. **Listen as Well as Share—**The principal is responsible for maintaining the school's image. Use social media to interact with parents and community. Use it to both hear from them and to share information. It can provide a way to detect rumors and allow you to respond quickly.
5. **You'll Be Well Received—**Almost everyone we've talked with reports the positive reception they get from having a blog, a Twitter feed, or a school Facebook page.
6. **It Builds Community—**People commit to things they care about. As we described earlier, the public is less trustful of schools. Social media promotes community by inviting people to be part of the conversation.
7. **It's Here to Stay—**While the forms of social media continue to change, the evidence is that our use of the tools will only accelerate. Increasingly, the expectation is that schools stay connected to their families and their community. Social media is the tool.

Adapted from: Porterfield & Carnes (n.d.); AASA Online

Challenges of Social Media

As teens increasingly use social networking sites, there is growing evidence that it may be promote inappropriate behavior. The National Crime Prevention Council (2007) found that 11% of students between 10 and 17 admitted to participating in some kind of cyberbullying.

Promoting Responsible Use

Schools need to work to work to promote responsible use of the Internet and social media sites. They should also be concerned about student use of these sites off-campus, because involvement has the potential to negatively impact the school and its students. But stopping access or banning use of smartphones and tablets doesn't really work. Increasingly, schools want students to use these devices for classroom instruction and to access rich and engaging instructional materials.

There are several steps for dealing with the use of social media:

Steps to Deal With Social Media

1. Develop a clear policy with a focus on the educationally valuable use of the Internet. Effective policies are supported by curriculum and professional development. Teachers should be expected to have students use the Internet only for high-quality, well-planned instructional activities.
2. Implement a comprehensive program to educate students and their families about online safety and responsible use.
3. Develop a plan to monitor Internet use at school.
4. Have appropriate consequences for inappropriate use of the Internet or social networking sites. Include administrators, school counselors, school psychologists, and school resource officers in developing and monitoring the plan.
5. Engage families in monitoring Internet use. Since most use occurs outside of school hours, it is critical that parents understand the importance of monitoring their children's online activities and how they should respond when inappropriate use takes place.

Socializing Safely Online

OnGuard Online (www.onguardonline.gov/socialnetworking.html), a service of the Federal Trade Commission, shares these tips for parents about safe social networking. The guidelines are also important for adults who use social media.

Tips for Parents

- Understand what information should be private.
- Use privacy settings to restrict who can access and post on your and your child's website.
- Be clear that you should post only information that you are comfortable with others seeing.
- Remember that once you post information online, you can't take it back, even if you delete it from your own device or account.
- Know how your kids are getting online, about bullying, and about sexual talk online.
- Tell your kids to trust their gut if they have suspicions.

Social Media as a Form of Expression

When social media is used at school, the legal guidance is clear about how principals can respond. Use of school computers, facilities, and school servers can be regulated. But when social media tools are used off campus, they may or may not be regulated by the school. Schools cannot regulate the vast majority of off-campus expression by students.

But when expression off campus impacts the operation of the school by disrupting the educational process, school authorities can intervene. The key is whether there is an actual disruption, not whether adults think there might be a disruption or find student expression distasteful.

When we talk to principals, they almost always talk about texting, a commonly used form of social media among students and adults. When used for harassment, to cyberbully, or to engage in sexting or to disrupt class, intervention may be required. But remember that courts have voided policies and student discipline if the speech is just unpleasant, insulting, or offensive.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying has become a major problem. Common Sense Media (2010) reported that 29% of 10- to 17-year-olds had been cyberbullied and 52% knew someone who had been cyberbullied.

The most common definition of cyberbullying is repeated, unwanted, aggressive behavior over a period of time using the Internet or other forms of social media technology. Cyberbullying has serious consequences for those bullied. Students bullied online are more likely to use alcohol or other drugs,

be suspended from school, have attendance problems, or experience emotional distress than those not bullied (Ybarra, Diener-West, & Leaf, 2007).

What School Leaders Can Do

- Determine if the incident occurred on campus or off campus.
- If off campus, did it cause a disruption at school?
- Document the impact and address the issue.
- Make sure your school has a policy on cyberbullying and penalties are clear.
- Educate students and families on responsible use of the Internet and social media.

Positive Aspects of Social Media

Although there are challenges that arise with social media in schools, there are also ways that social media can positively impact the school community.

Ways Social Media Positively Impact the School Community

- Communication
- School Safety
- Productivity
- Professional Learning
- Instruction

Social Media as a Communication Tool

The online presence for many schools has moved beyond the traditional school website. It now includes a Facebook page (www.facebook.com); a Twitter account (www.twitter.com); blogs by teachers, principals, or the superintendent; and YouTube (www.youtube.com) and Flickr (www.flickr.com) for sharing videos and photos about school events. Some schools have even developed an iPhone app (www.apple.com/webapps/) for their school. The sites frequently share calendar information, student handbooks, school news, access to the school's website, and photos and videos.

Your website is often the first place families go to for information about your school. Increasingly, families rely on your social media accounts, as well as your website, for current, up-to-date information about things like school closings, lunch menus, and school activities.

Regardless of the tool you use to communicate online, there are five important tips for encouraging families to return, again and again, for information.

Five Tips to Encourage Parents to Visit Your Online Content

- Keep it fresh and original—Updated content is critical and fresh, original content brings them back.
- Know your audience—Provide content that is relevant to the audience and choose stories and information that meets their needs. Use a human, personal voice when writing content.
- Make it easy to navigate—Name pages and content accurately so it is easy to find. Routinely check links to make sure they work and include a search box so visitors can easily locate information.
- Use a clean, simple, professional design—First impressions are important. So, pay attention to the look of your site. Use bullet points to improve the layout and avoid use of too much text.
- Expand using links—Include links that takes visitors to additional content. You might link to your school's feeder schools or to information on college admissions.

Adapted from: Williamson & Johnston (2012)

Social Media and School Safety

Social media outlets have also become useful during a crisis and can be used as part of your school's school safety plan. In 2011 when tornados devastated Joplin, Missouri, and Tuscaloosa, Alabama, the school districts discovered that social media was the primary means of communicating with families and staff. Often, it was the only way. Their social media tools allowed them to locate students and families and share information about school openings, bus routes, and relocated classrooms. More on social media and school safety is included in Chapter U: Under Pressure: School Safety.

Social Media as a Productivity Tool

There is a whole set of social media tools that can be used to improve productivity. Let's look at a few of our favorites:

Productivity Social Media Tools

Scheduling Meetings—Our favorite tool, because it's free, is Doodle (www.doodle.com). You can use it to identify potential meeting times and invite participants. It provides an easy-to-read report once people respond to the invitation.

Enhancing Collaboration—A wiki is a combination of a website and a place to post, revise, and edit work. Ron likes to use wikis when he works with groups. What's most powerful is that a wiki allows groups to collaborate on planning and implementing projects without having to constantly meet. Membership in the wiki can be controlled and the wiki keeps a record of any changes made by members. Our favorite is Wikispaces (www.wikispaces.com), which has a free plan for K–12 schools that is free of ads.

Maintaining Meeting Records—We like Meeting Diary (www.meetingdiary.com) as a way to keep online records of meetings we've attended, along with the agenda and a summary of major decisions.

Social Media for Building Connections and Professional Learning

There are several social media tools that can support your own professional learning and connections. They include sites like LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) to create a professional profile and build connections to others in your profession and to professional groups. It's important to separate your professional profile from your personal or family profile that might be on Facebook.

We also encourage you to consider creating your own Personal Learning Network (PLN). It's a way of using the Internet and social media to manage your own learning and to organize the information you receive. PLNs are not new. Often they are just networks of professional contacts, but with social media it's possible to add experts and colleagues from around the world to your network. Google has a set of tools for creating your own personal

learning network (http://sites.google.com/site/buildingapln/). You'll find more on developing a PLN in Chapter V: Valuing Your Role as a Learner.

Social Media as an Instructional Tool

Social media has also emerged as a powerful tool for teaching and learning. Any discussion of its use is out of date before it is published. But what's important to recognize is that there is incredible digital social media technology that can be used to fully engage students and to provide teachers with access to rich content for their classes.

Schools have begun to capitalize on the advantages of social networking. The possibilities are limitless and the examples grow daily.

Sample Uses of Social Media for Instruction

- Teachers use *YouTube* videos in classes or ask students to create videos and post them on *YouTube* for others to access and critique. The Flat Classroom Project (www.flatclassroomproject.org/New+Projects+0910) is one example. At this site, educators developed social networking sites for use in class or for assignments to be completed at home.
- Some classes create their own web page and use it to create classroom community to share information or to recognize student accomplishments.
- Teachers can have students create fake Facebook pages for story characters or historical figures. Other students can comment on the status updates.
- Students can demonstrate understanding of content through a Twitter feed. Use a specific hashtag and ask students to tweet the most important points during the lesson or while working on their homework. The feed can be used the following day as a review of content.
- Create a blog to expand literature circles. For example, two classes from different schools can read a book and use the blog to write their responses to the text.

A Final Note

It is easy to focus on the negative aspects of social media, but we encourage you to look beyond those and consider the way that social media has

changed communication, access to information, and our own personal and professional learning. Social media technology is a transformative tool, one that is here to stay.

Skills for Principals

- Nurture and support a culture of openness and collaboration.
- Learn about new trends that are impacting your school.
- Talk with teachers, families, and other stakeholders about social media technology, its benefits, and how to minimize the negatives.
- Support professional development on new and emerging technologies.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

The School Leader's Guide to Social Media by Ron Williamson and Howard Johnston.

Teaching the IStudent: A Quick Guide to Using Mobile Devices and Social Media in the K–12 Classroom by Mark Barnes.

Pew Internet and American Life Project (www.pewinternet.org) This research center provides information and tools for understanding the impact of social media on American society.

Visit the Connected Principals Blog (www.connectedprincipals.com) to learn about how other principals use social media technology.

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K

Keys to Successful Advocacy

I'm passionate about people. I've spent my life in advocacy. People matter—whether or not we agree on the issue, people matter.

—Ann Marie Buerkle

Think About It

What strategies or programs are currently in place at your school to communicate with the public and advocate for your school?

Advocacy is one of the most important roles of a school leader. Advocacy is the primary tool for effectively communicating with the public, as well as local and state elected officials and the media about education issues in your community. The goal of any advocacy campaign is to increase the abilities and willingness of communities to participate actively in important education issues and in developing and implementing strategies to best meet these needs.

As you regularly communicate with school stakeholders—students, parents, teachers, and the community—they learn key messages about the school's programs, policies, and practices. It is an effective way to create a positive image of the school and to share the school's successes. We'll look at five specific areas to address:

Five Areas

1. Sharing your knowledge about your issues
2. Presenting yourself well to the media
3. Understanding opposition
4. Building a network
5. The final point: editing yourself

Sharing Your Knowledge About Your Issues

The cornerstone of your advocacy and advocacy efforts is your ability to share your knowledge about issues. There are two key tools that you should have in your advocacy toolbox: the One-Page Fact Sheet and the Elevator Speech.

One-Page Fact Sheet

The One-Page Fact Sheet helps you organize the important facts and points of your issue. It can be used as a handout, and it will give you the necessary background information as well as the added confidence to discuss the issue. A One-Page Fact Sheet is essential for your preparation. One page is your limit. Most decision-makers want the basic facts and don't want wasted time. The limit also enables you to keep your message focused.

Key Points in a One-Page Fact Sheet

- Clearly define the issue.
- State your position on the issue.
- Clarify what you want the decision-maker to do.
- Define five talking points in order of importance.
- Provide two references to support the issue.
- Make the sale with a closure statement.

Elevator Speech

There are occasions when you have a brief opportunity to make personal contact with a key decision-maker. In those cases, you should be prepared to give a personal story on your connection to education and the importance of

your issue. The elevator speech is a 30- to 60-second story that includes three elements:

1. Your name and your job
2. Your key issue
3. What you would like the decision-maker to do

You should practice telling your story and explaining why you care about this issue with another person. This will give you confidence when you have a golden opportunity: a chance or planned meeting with a key decision-maker.

Presenting Yourself Well to the Media

At some point, you will likely be required to deal with the media, whether it is your local newspaper or some form of electronic media. Don't be taken by surprise; anticipate that you will need to communicate with the media and plan appropriately. Preparation is your friend, especially when there is a crisis (see Chapter U: Under Pressure: School Safety).

Tips for Dealing With the Media

- Preparation is your best friend—learn as much as you can about the reporter and the audience.
- Establish your communication goals for each interview.
- Determine two or three key points to make to reach your goal.
- Speak in "memorable language."
- Learn and use the "bridging technique." Redirect the interview to your key points.
- Practice, practice, practice. Practice on camera if possible.
- Do not wear clothes or use mannerisms that distract from your message.
- Forget jargon, now and forever.
- Make sure that the mind is in gear before the mouth travels.
- Look at the reporter when answering questions; turn to the camera when delivering a key point.
- Steady eyes suggest honesty; blinking or darting eyes suggest nervousness and dishonesty.
- Anticipate questions and have answers ready. Once the interview is scheduled, try to figure out what questions the reporter might ask.
- Relax.

Understanding Opposition

It's important to recognize the different groups that make up your school community. They include families, students, and staff, as well as the public and especially the media and elected officials. You probably know people who will support you on any new initiative, as well as those who won't (see Chapter N: New Ideas, New Challenges). When dealing with advocacy, it is crucial to anticipate opposition. Stakeholders fall into the following groups: champions of your cause, allies, the fence sitter, mellow opponent, and the hard-core opponent. There are general strategies for working with all groups.

General Strategies

- Establish your credibility early by providing data-based information.
- Deliver your messages in clear and concise language; avoid jargon.
- Remember to frame your message and stay on task. Oftentimes, stakeholders want to discuss a broader issue, and you need to refocus.
- Use real-life stories from your community.

In working with "champions" and allies, continue to provide current information by staying in contact and answering questions that may arise. For the fence sitter and mellow opponent, be open to listening to their concerns and respect their questions. This group may be the swing votes in decision making. Specifically, the fence sitter and mellow opponent may have philosophical questions or just a questioning manner. Listening to a dissenting voice and responding in a positive manner gives you opportunity for open dialogue. The hard-core opponent is your biggest challenge. Be respectful, even if you disagree. Be prepared for the hard questions and, if you can't answer their questions, you may have to compromise in a way that doesn't violate your ethics.

Building a Network

To be truly effective, you need to build a network of people who can help you communicate. Remember, communication is a two-way street, so this group will serve two purposes: to help you understand how stakeholders in various groups perceive a situation and to help you communicate your message. There are actually several layers of this strategy. For example, if you lead a large school, you may use an existing leadership team to assist you in this area. In addition, you may want one network for parents and

another one for the business community. Or, you may want one network that incorporates all those groups.

One model is the Key Communicator Network, developed by the National School Advocacy Association. That organization recommends a series of steps for building a network and leading that group. As you work with stakeholders, there is one key point to remember: As the principal, you are the face of the group. Share responsibility, but don't forget that in the eyes of the community, you are responsible for getting things done and for sharing reliable and accurate information. Never create a situation in which you compromise your beliefs about honesty and trustworthiness.

Building a Key Communicator Network

- Bring together a small group of trusted people who know the community. Together, identify the people to whom others listen. While the bank president may be an opinion leader, so might the barber, cab driver, bartender, or supermarket checkout clerk.
- Create a workable list of people to invite to join your network. Make sure that all segments of the community are represented.
- Send a letter to the potential members, explaining that you want to create a new communications group for your school to help the community understand the challenges, successes, and activities of your school. In the letter, invite the potential members to an initial meeting and include a response form.
- Make follow-up phone calls to those who do not return the response form, especially those who will be most important to have in your network.
- Start the initial meeting by explaining that those in the audience have been invited because you see them as respected community members who care about the education that students are being provided. Also, point out that you believe schools operate best when the community understands what is taking place and becomes involved in providing the best possible learning opportunities for students. Then, describe the objectives of a Key Communicator Network:
  - to provide network members with honest, objective, consistent information about the school;
  - to have the network members deliver this information to others in the community when they are asked questions or in other opportunities; and

(*Continued*)

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- to keep their ears open for any questions or concerns community members might have about the school. Those concerns should be reported to the principal or person in charge of the network so communication efforts can deal with those concerns. (It's always best to learn about concerns when one or two people have them instead of when 20 or 30 are vocally sharing them with others.)

- Ask the invitees for a commitment to serve on the network and find out the best way to communicate with them, i.e., e-mail, fax, or telephone.
- Establish a Key Communicator Network newsletter specifically for these people. After the first year, send out a short evaluation form to see how the network is working and how it might be improved.

For more information about Key Communicator Networks, contact the National School Public Relations Association (www.nspra.org) to purchase a copy of *A Guidebook for Opinion Leader/Key Communicator Programs.*

Social Media as an Advocacy Tool

All school leaders are advocates for their school, and that involves sharing information about your school with both your internal and external stakeholders. We believe that every principal needs an advocacy plan and once you've developed your plan, consider using the various forms of social media (blog, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram) to share your message. Social media have become the primary means of communication for many families and entire segments of our society. Younger, more technologically adept parents turn first to social media for information about their children's schools. Additional information about social media for communication is in Chapter J: Juggling Social Media.

Editing Yourself

Finally, whether you are communicating in writing or verbally, it's important to process your thoughts and to revise your message. Think of yourself as your own editor: After you have organized your thoughts, go back and edit to ensure your content is clear and concise and communicates your message as effectively as possible. Use the following tips for editing (adapted from Lew Armistead, *LA Communications*) to help you begin.

Tips for Editing

E	Edit from the perspective of your audience. Think of how they will hear your message and revise to match their needs.
D	Delay. After one revision, put it aside, wait, and then come back to it. It's easy to become too close to your writing; you need some space.
I	Identify the desired result. Can you state this? If not, you are missing the call to action. Give your audience an idea of the appropriate response.
T	Trust yourself—in addition to spell check. The computer won't catch everything. Don't assume it will.
I	Invite a second opinion. Have a colleague, friend, or assistant check for errors. They may see something you have missed.
N	Narrow your choices. One trap is providing too much information. Keep your focus, and keep it simple.
G	Get feedback. If you have time, ask trusted stakeholders to provide feedback on the content. Ask them to identify your key points and your desired result. If they can't, then your message isn't clear.

A Final Note

Working with the public is a necessary part of your job. You are the face of your school, and your school is a part of the community. Therefore, you should always be prepared to communicate with those around you and advocate for your school.

Skills for Principals

- Understand the importance of planned community relations.
- Develop a system for regular communication with school constituents, including families and community members.
- Provide honest, truthful communication above all else.
- Communicate and act from shared vision and mission so that the community understands, supports, and acts on the school's vision and mission.
- Uses communication strategies to develop family and local community partnerships.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

Confronting Power: The Practice of Policy Advocacy by Jeff Unsicker.

The One-Hour Activist: The 15 Most Powerful Actions You Can Take to Fight for the Issues and Candidates You Care About by Christopher Kush.

This research brief provides research-based recommendations for advocacy: www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/Advocacy_In_Action.pdf

This short article describes the principal's role in advocacy: www.nassp.org/Content.aspx?topic=56558

L

Limited Funding Doesn't Have to Limit You

I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work.

—Thomas A. Edison

Think About It

How do you deal with limited resources in your school?

No school is immune from the need to plan for a future with declining or, at the best, stable resources. Schools are caught between expectations for improved student performance and the reality that there are fewer human and financial resources to support the program. Almost universally, the issue is one of how to be both efficient and more effective. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan (2010) calls the current situation "the New Normal," meaning that schools will see increasing demands for performance in a climate of declining resources.

There are generally three responses. First, you can identify areas where you might reduce expenses by eliminating programs or reducing budgets. But in many schools, these efficiencies have already been achieved. Second, you can consider alternative ways of doing things you're already doing. For

example, some rural schools have shifted to a four-day week to reduce costs of transportation, food service, and office support. Some have begun to work together by combining programs, sharing teachers, or sharing central office resources. In Michigan, one district contracted with a nearby district for a portion of the superintendent's time. Others consolidated human resources or business services. Third, you can prioritize what you are doing. This is often difficult, even when you use data, because it is often seen as valuing one program more than others. If you prioritize, be sure to anchor your decisions in your school's vision and mission.

The Four "R's"

Some schools have learned that reducing every program a little isn't very effective. Schools cannot simply cut their way out of this crisis. It may be necessary to focus on fewer things and do them really well. Always be sure someone is advocating for the neediest students, those requiring the most support. These challenging decisions are almost always better when teachers, families, and other stakeholders are included (see Chapter C: Collaborating for Success and Chapter W: Working Together for the Future)

Everything must be on the table—the way we use technology, time, space, instructional materials, and personnel. Protecting learning opportunities for children must be the highest priority, but teachers and administrators must attend to their own personal well-being while also making these very difficult decisions. Especially important is that the voices of those children and families most in need be heard in all of the decision-making processes.

The strategies fall into four categories, the "Four R's"—reduce, refine, reprioritize, and regenerate (Johnston & Williamson, 2014). Many of these approaches are not easy, and they may not be enthusiastically embraced by staff, parents, students, or even community. They are most successful when decisions are made in a collaborative and inclusive environment, one that welcomes open debate and values consensus building.

The Four "R's"

- Reduce
- Refine
- Reprioritize
- Regenerate

Reduce

Reductions are often the most common response to declining resources. Cuts should be made in a fair, reasonable, transparent, and humane manner. Reducing the budget most often involves freezing current spending, making across-the-board cuts, identifying targeted reductions, or eliminating programs.

Reducing budgets is something no one likes, but almost everyone understands. What people want is information about the impact it will have on them, their programs, or their children.

We believe good fiscal decision making has several elements:

Elements of Good Fiscal Decision Making

High-quality Information—Help people understand deficits, steps taken to soften the effect, and the data used to make decisions.

Consistency of Message—People rely on those they trust (including social media friends) for information and not necessarily school leaders. Invest in "internal public relations" to make sure everyone in the school is giving the same message about reductions.

Confidentiality—Be careful what you say and to whom you say it. If reductions target a program or specific personnel, don't let a leak reveal the information first.

Trust in the Organization—When school staff support a shared vision of the school's mission, they are more likely to deliver a consistent message.

Address Key Issues Directly—Deal with real concerns as soon as possible. Everyone wants to know if they will lose their job. Make sure messages are accurate and lessen anxiety.

Don't Make Promises—Statements made early can feel like a commitment and trust will be damaged if your "promise" can't be kept.

Dissent—Recognize that dissenting opinions are always uncomfortable but are important. They can reveal problems that weren't thought about and they can give you clues about the resistance you will encounter.

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Different Audiences—Consistency of your message is critical, but different audiences want different information. Teachers will be concerned about jobs. Parents may be concerned about programs for their children or school safety. The community may be concerned with the image of the school or community.

Someone Will Be Unhappy—Budget cuts are always tough and someone will always be upset and angry about the outcome.

Adapted from: Johnston & Williamson (2014)

Refine

Schools can also reorganize, streamline, or improve efficiency without cutting core programs. The focus is finding the most efficient way to achieve goals rather than making a fundamental change.

What Doesn't Work

Shrink by Laying off Newest Teachers—They often have lower salaries, fewer benefits, and may be among the most effective, especially with a mentoring program.

Reduce and Narrow the Curriculum—Bare-bones programs may not prepare students for college or compete in a knowledge-based economy. This may drive families away from your school.

Furlough—Shortening the school day or furloughing teachers reduces learning time and causes financial hardship for employees, leading them to consider working elsewhere.

Pass Costs to Families—Charging for programs widens the gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots" and students may be deprived of opportunity because of parental decisions.

Adapted from: Petrilli (2012)

The Annenberg Institute for School Reform (Barnes, 2004) suggests four areas where refinements work:

Four Areas to Refine

- Human Resource Use and Development
- School Organization
- Fiscal and Technical Resources
- Social Resources

Human Resource Use and Development

There are several general strategies that you can consider to refine the human resource mix in your school (Petrilli, 2012).

- Ask teachers to take on additional responsibilities for additional pay.
- Reduce ancillary positions or specialized personnel.
- Trade down by getting services for lower cost. For example, use county health personnel rather than school nurses.
- Invest in staff by cross-training so teachers can teach in more than one area.

School Organization

Take a look at how your school is organized and the structures that are part of the year. Modest increases in class size, while not desired, are a refinement, as is redesigning the school schedule, which we discuss in Chapter Z: Zero in on Your Schedule.

Fiscal and Technical Resources

First, spend money on things that work and stop spending money on things that don't. That may require a tough examination of past practices and a willingness to abandon things that have been in place for a long time.

Thoughtfully integrate technology in ways that will strengthen and enhance the program. Most states permit online courses, and they are a good option for expanding and enriching the curriculum. Some schools teach foreign language by using Rosetta Stone or some other online software system rather than a traditional classroom. Or, arrange on-line tutoring from low-cost college students, retirees, or volunteers rather than more costly full-time employees.

Social Resources

Community assets are a tremendous resource. Partnerships are ways of using community assets to increase your resources. Think about potential partners in your community and devote time to cultivating relationships. Chapter K: Keys to Successful Advocacy discusses this in greater detail.

Reprioritize School Goals

This is perhaps the most complex of the four strategies because of the need to think deeply about the school's mission and values and which activities are most closely aligned with the mission. Rather than tinkering with programs, reprioritizing reconsiders maintaining programs that don't align with the school's mission.

There is no single process that makes reprioritizing easy. Your school is composed of multiple interest groups who will want to be involved. The most contentious decisions in any organization are around scarce resources and how they are used (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Rethinking some of a school's fundamental operations can lead to new priorities. In many districts, that has included thinking about a four-day week, reducing transportation for middle and high school students, changing the schedule (Chapter Z: Zero in on Your Schedule), greater use of technology including online courses and online professional development, and securing other funding from local, state, or federal grants to pay for some programs or services.

When reprioritizing, it is important to use a process that is inclusive of all interest groups, is focused on building consensus, and values disparate points of view. Strategies for working with groups are discussed in Chapter C: Collaborating for Success and Chapter O: Options for Successful Meetings.

Regenerate

Generating additional resources or finding new sources of funds to support innovation and growth is another strategy. Additional funding can come from business or community partnerships, school foundations, grants, fees, and entrepreneurial activity.

Business Partnerships

Business partnerships are typically established between a school or district and a local business or a national partner with a local presence (Johnston

& Williamson, 2014). They are most successful when there is a mutually supportive relationship and the partners commit themselves to specific goals and activities benefiting students.

While additional resources are good for a school, they are also good for a business that may have enhanced good will and a stronger presence in the community (Council for Corporate and School Partnerships, n.d.).

Community Partnerships

Community partnerships bring together the resources of local businesses, service clubs, nonprofit agencies, volunteers, churches, and colleges and universities—almost anyone with an interest in children and young people. They are a powerful social resource that schools can tap into to support their educational programs (Johnston & Williamson, 2014).

School Foundations

A foundation is a legal entity that is created to provide support for a cause, in this case, your school or school district. Many schools and school districts create their own foundations to support educational programs. You will want specialized legal advice when creating a foundation, and many schools we've worked with use a local attorney who donates their services.

Grants and Entrepreneurial Activity

Many schools have become much more aggressive in seeking grants and contracts. A consortium of five small districts that Ron worked with in Oregon sought a state grant to pay for adding interactive television, so that they could share Spanish, accelerated math, and chemistry teachers. The teachers would rotate among the five high schools but be able to interact with students on all five campuses.

This same consortium shared the costs of a grant writer and by the end of the first year found that the position was more than paid for by the number of grants that were secured.

Some schools have also begun to use entrepreneurial activity to provide students experience managing a business and raising revenue. In some cases, they create products for sale outside of school, but most of the time they involve retail operations housed within a school, often food and beverage sales. Some high schools we've worked with have school stores that sell supplies and spirit wear. Others have a coffee shop open before and after school. Still others have a smoothie shop. In several cases, local foundations

provided the seed money including equipment and initial inventory to start the business and local citizens contributed their services to help with financial management.

At one high school in Oregon, one class partnered with a local bicycle manufacturer to produce bicycle frames and another managed an organic garden that supplied local restaurants, food banks, the school cafeteria, and their own produce stand. Students were involved in every aspect of the operations and gained invaluable experience.

A Final Note

Good leaders recognize that stable and declining resources can be a challenge, but rather than being disheartened, they act in courageous and visionary ways to reconsider how their school uses its human and fiscal resources in support of a quality education for every student.

Skills for Principals

- Nurture and support a culture of openness and collaboration.
- Monitor and evaluate management and operational systems to maximize efficiency.
- Obtain, allocate, and utilize human, fiscal, and technological resources to support quality instruction and student learning.
- Create partnerships and alliances with community agencies to support student services.
- Advocate with families, community, and political leaders for resources to better serve students.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

Leading Schools in an Era of Declining Resources by Howard Johnston and Ron Williamson.

This streaming 30-minute audio describes how a high-poverty high school impacts student achievement despite limited resources: www.npr.org/2013/03/21/174958968/turning-failing-schools-around

M

Motivating Teachers

On what high-performing companies should be striving to create: A great place for great people to do great work.

—Marilyn Carlson, former CEO of Carlson Companies

Think About It

How motivated are your teachers?

What is the difference between a motivated and an unmotivated teacher? See if the following characteristics reflect your teachers:

Characteristics

Teacher with High Motivation	Teacher with Low Motivation
■ Shows interest ■ Always striving to do more ■ Engaged ■ Focused	■ Lack of interest ■ Does the minimum ■ Disengaged ■ Distracted

(*Continued*)

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Teacher with High Motivation	Teacher with Low Motivation
■ Connected to leaders and other teachers ■ Makes connections to other professional development and his/her classroom ■ Secure and confident in own abilities ■ Puts forth effort	■ Disconnected from leaders and other teachers ■ Doesn't see relationships among aspects of professional development and his/her classroom ■ Concerned about self-needs ■ No effort

Does that look familiar? Of course, the real issue is not identifying a teacher's motivation—it's understanding and dealing with it.

Types of Motivation

Let's talk about the two main types of motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation includes all the outside ways we try to influence a teacher, such as rewards, teacher evaluations, and student test scores. Intrinsic motivation comes from within the teacher. With extrinsic rewards, we can get temporary results, but for long-term impact, we need to help teachers activate their intrinsic motivation.

It's similar to looking at the ocean. Barbara loves watching the waves, but she's only seeing the surface. She doesn't see the perilous undercurrents. Similarly, extrinsic motivation looks good, but we don't notice the dangers. Also, the true beauty of the ocean is underneath the surface. As we go deeper, there are beautiful marine creatures, fish, and coral. Instead of short-lived waves, you see long-lasting beauty. That is intrinsic motivation.

Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic motivation is that which comes from outside a teacher; anything that is external. In our educational system, we automatically use extrinsic rewards, such as teacher evaluations and measuring teachers based on students' test scores. Although these can be positive for some teachers, they also carry negative connotations. Specifically, most teachers believe they cannot control students' test scores, so the accountability that accompanies those scores can have a negative impact on morale.

Positive Aspects of Extrinsic Motivation

Some authors, such as Alfie Kohn, believe there are not any appropriate uses for external motivation. Based on my experiences, I believe there are limited uses for it. For example, I agree with Daniel Pink (2010), author of *Drive*, who compares extrinsic motivation to caffeine, noting that it gets you going (although you are less motivated later). Daniel Pink also points out that extrinsic rewards do work for a short time for mechanical, rote tasks. That's why actions such as writing a personal note to a teacher make a difference. Positive extrinsic motivation can also balance the negativity that sometimes comes with external accountability.

Examples of Extrinsic Motivation That Can Positively Impact Teacher Morale

- Personal notes
- Praising a teacher for trying a new instructional practice
- Highlighting a teacher in weekly e-mails or newsletters
- Letting a teacher know about their advocacy for students in their class
- Acknowledging a teacher's adoption of a new technology

Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation is that which comes from within the teacher. It is internal as opposed to external. With intrinsic motivation, teachers appreciate teaching learning for its own sake. They enjoy learning and the feelings of accomplishment that accompany teaching. There are many benefits to intrinsic motivation. Intrinsically motivated teachers tend to prefer challenging work, are more confident about their abilities, and believe they can truly make a difference in terms of student learning.

The Foundational Elements of Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation has two foundational elements: People are more motivated when they value what they are doing and when they believe they have a chance for success. Teachers see value in a variety of ways, but the main three are relevance, activities, and relationships.

Value

Teachers typically see value through the relevance of what you are asking them to do. That's why we strive to show practical applications. When you implement a new initiative or ask teachers to try a new strategy in their classroom, they want to see the function. In fact, most teachers have a streaming music station playing in their heads, WII-FM—what's in it for me? That's why they ask you, "Why do we need to do this?"

When Barbara does workshops with teachers, she knows they come into her session with one burning question: "How can I use this information immediately?" Adult learners are juggling so many demands, they prioritize activities and their attention based on how well something meets their immediate needs. So often, we forget to show teachers why they need to know what we are doing. Teachers are more engaged in learning when they see a useful connection to themselves.

Next, there is value in the type of learning activity you are doing. Teachers are generally more motivated by doing something than by simply "sitting and getting." They are also more motivated when they have ownership in the activity. Rather than simply planning a new initiative, involve teachers in the decision-making process.

Finally, teachers find value in their relationships, with you and their peers. The old adage, "they don't care what you know until they know how much you care" is true. Teachers need to feel liked, cared for, and respected by their leaders. Most teachers also need the same from their peers. If they feel isolated from other teachers and from you, they are disengaged and less likely to see value in what they are doing.

Success

Teachers are also motivated when they believe they have a chance to be successful, and that belief is built on four building blocks: level of challenge, experiences, encouragement, and shared motivation.

First, the degree of alignment between the difficulty of an activity and a teacher's skill level is a major factor in self-motivation. Imagine that you enjoy playing soccer, and you have the chance to compete in a local game. You will be playing against Lionel Messi (Argentina and Barcelona), named World Player of the Year four times in six years. How do you feel? In that situation, there's plenty of opportunity for challenge, probably too much challenge! Or perhaps you love reading novels, but the only language you can read is Russian. How motivated will you be in a literature class? This is where professional development is crucial. As you are motivating teachers

to implement a new initiative or improve their teaching, remember to also provide the appropriate support to improve their skill level. For suggestions on effective professional development, see Chapter P: Professional Learning Facilitates Growth.

A teacher's experiences are also an important factor. One is more likely to believe they can be successful implementing a new grouping strategy if they've already had success using small groups in their classroom. On the other hand, if a teacher continually struggles with behavioral issues during group work, they are less likely to try the new strategy.

Ways to Build Teachers' Feelings of Success

- Find another teacher or mentor to assist when a teacher tries something new.
- Provide time for teachers to collaborate with each other to craft high-quality lessons.
- Ask a teacher to share an effective practice with colleagues.
- Share stories about successful instruction in your school.

A third building block to feelings of success is the encouragement a teacher receives from others. Encouragement is "the process of facilitating the development of the person's inner resources and courage towards positive movement" (Losoncy & Dinkmeyer, 1980, p. 16).

When you encourage, you accept teachers as they are, so they will accept themselves. You value and reinforce attempts and efforts and help the teacher realize that mistakes are learning tools. Encouragement says, "Try, and try again. You can do it. Go in your own direction, at your own pace. I believe in you."

This is particularly important during the evaluation process. No teacher is perfect, yet we all want to be. As you are providing constructive criticism, be sure to phrase it in encouraging ways.

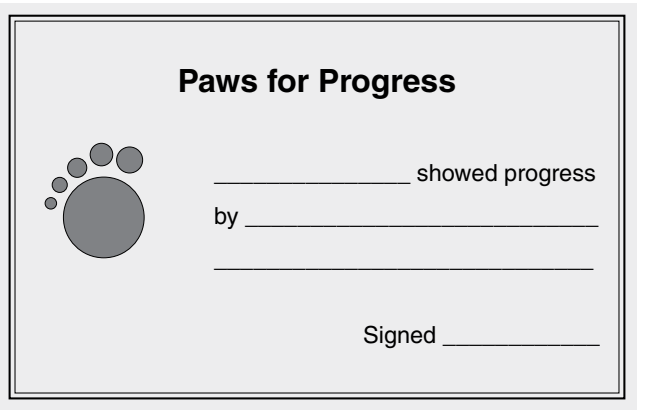
Samples of Encouraging Phrases

- Building on today's lesson, what might you modify to strengthen its success with English language learners?
- Talk with me about the successes, and the challenges, of today's lesson.
- Every time I teach a lesson, I reflect on it and identify ways to improve. What might you change when you teach this lesson again?

Shared Motivation

A final concept to consider is that of sharing motivation among all stakeholders. Intrinsic motivation is fostered in an overall environment of encouragement. Just as teachers share what students are doing well, it's important for parents to recognize and share the positive experiences they and their sons and daughters have with teachers. Ask your administrative assistants, custodians, and cafeteria workers to notice the "good" that is happening and to comment on it. Of course, you also want to extend the same type of actions toward them.

One specific action we saw in a school included positive notes. The school's mascot was a tiger, and they used "Paws for Praise" with their students. The principal expanded this to use with teachers. She completed the certificates whenever she saw a teacher making a difference, and then she put a basket of the certificates with pens beside the teachers' mailboxes. Teachers were encouraged to write notes to each other.



Barbara remembers visiting the school soon after this started. One teacher described the experience to her. "I cried when I received my first note. In 20 years of teaching, I've never had another teacher tell me something specifically that I was doing well. It was so confirming and encouraging, especially since our test scores aren't as high as we'd like them to be. It reminded me that although I'd like the scores to be better, I also need to assess myself on other things."

A Final Note

Motivation is hard-wired into each individual. However, at times, teachers are not motivated to try something new. By creating an environment that encourages intrinsic motivation and by ensuring value and success, we can increase teachers' motivation.

Skills for Principals

- Build, nurture, and sustain productive relationships with teachers and other staff.
- Promote understanding and appreciation for the diverse strengths and instructional skills of teachers and other staff.
- Nurture and sustain a culture of trust and collaboration and a focus on learning.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us by Daniel Pink.

Motivating Inspiring Teachers by Todd Whitaker and Beth Whitaker.

This article shares principals' ideas for motivating teachers: www.educationworld.com/a_admin/archives/motivating_teachers.shtml

This article and set of videos addresses, from the teacher's viewpoint, what motivates teachers: ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/2014/07/30/what-motivates-teachers/

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N

New Ideas, New Challenges

Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.

—George Bernard Shaw

Think About It

How do your teachers react to a proposed change?

There is an old saying, "The only person who likes change is a baby with a wet diaper." As a principal, you have likely dealt with someone who was not supportive of a proposed change. However, one of your chief functions as a principal is to lead change, even when you do not have the support of everyone in your school.

Ways People Respond to Change

People respond to change in one of three ways. Approximately 5% are early adopters who are eager to embrace almost any innovation. Another 5% will never adopt change; nothing can get them to embrace an innovation. The remainder are those people who can be moved toward support for

change if they are given sufficient time and information. In this chapter, we will focus on that 90%. How can you help those who are reluctant to change become part of positive progress?

Reasons for Resisting Change

Think of the last time you wanted to implement a change in your school. You probably heard a variety of responses similar to the following:

Comments Resisting Change

- "I don't see why we need to do this."
- "You (the principal) already made up your mind to change."
- "My opinion doesn't count."
- "This is just one more thing to do."
- "How does this relate to what we are already doing?"
- "We've tried this before and it didn't work."

People resist change for one of two reasons. They don't see the value of the change, or they do not believe they can be successful with the change. Each of the comments above fits into one of those categories. As a principal, it is imperative to understand these two reasons in order to respond accordingly.

Value

Just as students ask, "Why do we need to learn this?" teachers ask, "Why do we need to do this?" The question may be spoken or unspoken, directed to you or discussed in the teachers' lounge, but it is always at the forefront of any proposed change. To support an innovation, teachers must understand the value of the change.

As you think about how the innovation you are considering is of value, it's important to remember Maslow's hierarchy. When you adopt an innovation, you may find that many employees revert to a lower level. They are concerned about basic needs (materials, training, schedule, etc.) and must understand how those will be met before they can address the higher levels of the hierarchy.

Maslow's Needs

Need as Identified by Maslow	Example of Staff Needs
Aesthetic Need (self-actualization)	▪ Attention to the needs of students first
Need for Understanding	▪ Focus on the developmental needs of students
Need for Knowledge	▪ Professional development: o Program models o Planning skills o Curriculum o Instructional strategies o Diversity issues o Assessment strategies
Esteem Needs Belonging Needs	▪ Will I be successful? ▪ Will I be valued? ▪ Will I fit in? ▪ How do the new social and work norms align with my beliefs?
Security Needs	▪ Where will I be working? ▪ Where will my room or office be located? ▪ What will my work look like? ▪ Who's making these decisions?
Survival Needs	▪ Will I continue to have a job? ▪ Will I have the skills for the job? ▪ Will I have sufficient and appropriate materials?

Adapted from: Maslow (1968)

Success

The second facet of resistance is the desire to succeed. Most people have high competence needs, and they believe they are successful in their current

work. Any change is viewed through a lens of how the person can continue to be successful. Therefore, you should provide appropriate support to help develop the skills to be successful with innovation.

How to Respond

Despite the appearance of stubbornness, most people don't resist just to resist; they resist because they lack information about an innovation or because they don't have adequate time to embrace it. Time and information are the two keys to overcoming resistance. First, you must provide time for most of those involved to adopt and learn about the innovation. Second, you will need to provide sufficient information about how the innovation will impact people's work. Remember, everyone needs to feel successful. There are five strategies you can use to smooth the transition process and overcome the resistance to change.

Strategy 1: Build Relationships and Involve People

The first strategy for overcoming resistance to change is to build relationships with all stakeholders and involve them in the proposed change. During this step, it's important to identify everyone who will be affected by the change. It's easy to overlook someone who is not directly involved in a project, but whose support will be critical in the future. Ensure their cooperation by involving them early.

Possible Stakeholders or Constituent Groups

- Families
- Community members
- Community service agencies (e.g., medical, mental health)
- Citizens without children in the schools
- Teachers and other school personnel
- Teachers from feeder schools
- City agencies (e.g., Recreation Department)

Strategy 2: Establish a Common Base of Information

As you work with all constituency groups, establish a common base of information for the proposed change. One of stumbling blocks to progress is a lack of information; therefore, be sure everyone has a sufficient knowledge

base to discuss and move ahead with the project. Although this can happen through a large group discussion, such as in a faculty meeting, it is usually more effective to provide multiple opportunities for conversation in smaller groups prior to a discussion with the entire faculty. In large groups, some voices dominate the discussion and it is easy to miss important information from people less willing to speak.

- Individually, make notes about current conditions in your school community. Identify critical issues and the evidence to support their inclusion.
- With colleagues, discuss the conditions you identified, develop a ranking or priority for the concerns, cite the evidence, and agree on trends affecting your school community. Discuss and identify the implications for each item for schools.

Concerns-Based Discussion Chart

Concern	Ranking	Evidence	Implications

Strategy 3: Provide a Clear, Concrete Result

This strategy is often assumed, and therefore it may be overlooked. In order to overcome resistance to change, teachers need to see a clear, defined outcome. You should always be able to answer one question: "If we are successful implementing _____, we will know it because we will see _____." In other words, what would success look like? This does not mean you must develop the vision yourself without any input; the most lasting visions are shared ones. However, for any proposed change, it is important to have a clear vision and share that vision with all constituent groups.

Strategy 4: Have a Structure That Supports Success

Fourth, you need to build a structure that supports success. This does not mean you must know every step prior to the innovation. However, you do need a way to clearly identify each step, a proposed time frame, roles and responsibilities, and necessary resources. Using a Process Chart such as the one that follows is helpful to ensure that everyone understands each

step and his or her role in the process. Remember that your structure should incorporate the elements of value and success, such as providing appropriate professional development that will help teachers feel more successful with the proposed change.

Process/Change

Strategy	Time Frame	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed

Strategy 5: Focus and Refocus the Conversation

Finally, keep the conversation focused. It is easy, particularly in a large group discussion, to become distracted by personal agendas. In a recent workshop, a leadership team was planning a remediation class for at-risk learners. Two teachers began to argue about classroom space and their own scheduling preferences. As we noted earlier, people revert to lower levels of Maslow's hierarchy when they are concerned about change. In this instance, the group had already developed a solution to both those issues, but the two teachers continued to complain. The principal reminded the group of the rationale for the remediation classes: to positively affect student learning for their neediest students, particularly second-language learners, by providing additional time for learning. She reframed the conversation, and the group was able to move forward. In addition to having a vision for change, you must continually keep that vision as a focus. And, at times, you will need to use the vision to refocus the conversation.

Helpful Ideas for Communicating When Conflict Is Present

- Share data and descriptions, not value judgments or interpretations.
- Use active listening skills.
- Focus on the present, not what has been or might be.
- Agree when those of a different viewpoint are right.
- Own your ideas and feelings; use "I" as much as possible.
- Guard against too much openness.
- Make constructive use of silence; provide and demand time to think.
- Delay making judgments or decisions.

(*Continued*)

(*Continued*)

- Explain, do not defend.
- Be sensitive to nonverbal clues and messages.
- Recognize and request rewording of questions that have no answers, are rhetorical, or include commands or directions.
- Avoid the use of superlatives and absolutes (most, best, always, never).
- Assume the motives of others are honorable.
- Discourage preaching and teaching behaviors.

A Final Note

Finally, remember that overcoming resistance to change is possible. The vast majority of your teachers can and will respond appropriately if they see the value of the innovation and if they believe they will be successful. It is your job to help them do so.

Skills for Principals

- Work collaboratively with school constituents to develop a shared vision and mission for the school.
- Promote continuous and sustained improvement.
- Collaboratively develop and implement plans to achieve the school vision and mission.
- Work with constituents to identify indicators of school success.
- Monitor those indicators, gather data about progress, and use those data to guide decisions about school improvement.
- Nurture a school culture that is trusting, has high expectations, and is focused on a high-quality learning experience for all students.
- Anticipate emerging trends at the local, regional, state, and national levels so that the school can respond appropriately.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

Who Moved My Cheese? by Spencer Johnson.

Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard by Chip Heath and Dan Heath.

This article discusses dealing with resistance to change: www.principals.org/Content/158/pl_mar10_everydaylead.pdf

This article by Michael Fullan describes how teachers must become change agents: www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar93/vol50/num06/Why-Teachers-Must-Become-Change-Agents.aspx

O

Options for Successful Meetings

As teamwork and cross-organizational projects increase, meetings become the setting in which much of the really important work gets done. Now more than ever team and organizational success is reliant on the quality of its meetings.

—From *Death by Meeting*, by Peter Lencioni

Think About It

How much of your time is spent in meetings? How often are you in charge of a meeting?

If you are like most of the principals we work with, you spend more time than you would like in meetings. And you've likely spent much time that you considered unproductive. When you are conducting a meeting, you want participants to feel that it was a successful, productive meeting. If that is your goal, remember this: Successful meetings are thoughtfully planned and implemented.

It Begins With Norms

A crucial part of any effective meeting is having a set of meeting standards or operational norms. This includes basic decisions, such as the seating arrangements. If you want an open discussion, try to arrange for participants to face each other, perhaps around a table or in a semicircle rather than in rows. Set a firm start and end time and stick to them. This shows that you respect the participants' time. If the meeting is lengthy, plan for a break, but again, set a time and adhere to that. Be sure that any speaker knows his or her allocated time and stays within those parameters.

Ask yourself, "How will we maintain our group memory of discussion and decisions?" Do you want to use charts posted visibly in the room, or will you have someone record notes? In today's age of technology, how can you utilize the equipment you have to support the process? You might even consider recording the meeting. A public recording provides visual clues, develops shared ownership, minimizes repetition, reduces status differences among participants, and makes accountability easier.

What are the guidelines for discussion? We often use a "parking lot," which is simply a poster in the room. Participants are given sticky notes, and if there is a question or discussion item that is off the topic, they write it on a note and post it in the parking lot. You can revisit those items at the end of the meeting if there is time, or you can discuss them individually or at another time.

It's also important to model collaborative discussion. Allowing adequate wait time in response to questions, asking open-ended questions, and giving everyone a chance to speak are the foundational elements of a collaborative discussion. Garmston and Wellman (2013) describe seven norms of collaboration that are helpful as you facilitate discussions.

Seven Norms of Collaboration

- **Pausing**: Pausing before responding or asking a question allows time for thinking and enhances dialogue, discussion, and decision making.
- **Paraphrasing**: Using a paraphrase starter that is comfortable for you, such as "As you are . . . " or "You're thinking . . . ," and following the starter with a paraphrase assists members of the group to hear and understand each other as they formulate decisions.
- **Probing**: Using gentle open-ended probes or inquiries such as, "Please say more . . . ," "I'm curious about . . . ," "I'd like to hear more

(*Continued*)

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about . . . ," or "Then, are you saying . . . ?" increases the clarity and precision of the group's thinking.

- **Putting ideas on the table**: Ideas are the heart of a meaningful dialogue. Label the intention of your comments. For example, you might say, "Here is one idea . . . ," "One thought I have is . . . ," or "Here is a possible approach . . . "
- **Paying attention to self and others**: Meaningful dialogue is facilitated when each group member is conscious of self and of others and is aware of not only what he or she is saying but also how it is said and how others are responding. This includes paying attention to learning style when planning for, facilitating, and participating in group meetings.
- **Presuming positive intentions**: Assuming that others' intentions are positive promotes and facilitates meaningful dialogue and eliminates unintentional put-downs. Using positive intentions in your speech is one manifestation of this norm.
- **Pursuing a balance between advocacy and inquiry**: Pursuing and maintaining a balance between advocating a position and inquiring about one's own and others' positions assists the group to become a learning organization.

Source: Garmston & Wellman (2013)

Meeting Planning Questions

There are three other questions you will want to consider when planning meetings:

Three Questions for Planning Meetings

- What is the purpose of the meeting?
- What is being decided?
- Who decides?

What Is the Purpose of the Meeting?

You may be thinking, "Of course I need to be clear about the purpose. Who doesn't do that?" But we've been to far too many meetings where the

purpose was unclear, unstated, or unknown. Think about it this way: Are you conducting a meeting in order to discuss and identify options and alternatives for a situation, or is the end result to make a decision? If you want to bring together a group of stakeholders to gather input, that is appropriate, but if they believe they are meeting to make a decision and then your meeting begins with a conflict, it is less likely to be productive.

What Is Being Decided?

Next, turn your attention to the specific agenda. It's important for participants to have a clear idea of what is to be discussed. The agenda may be developed collaboratively, but plan for that in advance. An agenda can also help you budget your time appropriately, so all information is covered. As you plan, ask yourself, "By the end of the meeting, will participants have the information they need to make a decision on the issue?" You might also consider whether your agenda allows for adequate discussion to inform the decision.

Characteristics of Quality Agendas

- Clearly state the purpose and/or goals of the meeting.
- Review agreed-upon operational norms and norms of collaboration.
- Provide clarity about the action to be taken (e.g., discussion, decision).
- Indicate the time allotted for each item.
- Provide time for reflection and processing of information.
- Include time at the end of the meeting to clarify what information should be shared and by whom.

Who Decides?

Prior to the meeting, determine the role of the group in terms of decision making. Is the task of the group to make a decision? Perhaps it is to make a recommendation or to study the issue. Is the decision-making body clear? For example, will the decision be made by the principal alone or by the principal with input? Perhaps the goal is for the decision to be made by the administrator with staff consensus or by the staff with administrative input. Or the decision may be made by the staff by consensus or by the staff by a majority vote. You may even have a subgroup making the decision. Each of these strategies is appropriate for certain situations; however, everyone needs to clearly understand their role.

Several years ago, while waiting to present a staff development session to elementary school teachers, we observed a principal conducting a short meeting. He explained that a decision needed to be made regarding staffing and personnel responsibilities for the next school year, and that it would be decided based on a vote from teachers and other staff. Everyone voted on a ballot and, at lunch, the principal privately explained that he was disappointed in the results. He said that he had trusted the staff to make the right decision, and they didn't. Then he said, "I'm going to tell them that we aren't doing it that way, we are going to do it my way." The morale of the teachers and staff plummeted, and the principal lost all credibility. That's exactly the situation you want to avoid.

As you determine who will make the decision, also consider the timeline for the decision, and make that clear to participants. Finally, determine how the decision will be shared with or communicated to the larger school community.

Planning Guide for Decision Making

Primary Decision-maker	Secondary Decision-makers	Stakeholders to Provide Input

Productivity Tools

There are a whole set of social media technology tools that you can use to help with meetings. In Chapter J: Juggling Social Media we discuss how to use social media for communication, productivity, and building connections and professional learning. But here are a few of the social media tools that can support productive meetings:

- Calendars—We like Doodle (www.doodle.com), a free tool for inviting and responding to meeting invitations.
- Collaborate—We've found a wiki (www.wikispaces.com) to promote interaction among meeting participants. It's also free and allows you to collaborate without the need to constantly meet.
- Tracking Decisions—We also like Meeting Diary (www.meetingdiary.com) to keep online minutes of meeting agenda, minutes, and decisions.

A Final Note

Ultimately, good meetings are interactive and provide for balanced participation. As you plan, find ways to engage every participant in the discussion. In addition to building ownership in the process, your participants will be more productive, and your meetings will be a success.

Skills for Principals

- Recognize the importance of and develop the capacity for distributed leadership.
- Organize meetings so that they are productive and support the attainment of school goals.
- Acknowledge the valuable accomplishments of teachers and other staff.
- Value the involvement of school constituents in decisions regarding school programs and school life.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

Boring Meetings Suck: Get More Out of Your Meetings, or Get Out of More Meetings by Jon Petz.

Powerfully Simple Meetings: Your Guide for Fewer, Faster, More Focused Meetings by Peter Kidd and Bryan Field.

This article contains tips from principals on how to conduct effective faculty meetings: www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin277.shtml

This blog entry from Connected Principals describes principles of effective meetings: http://connectedprincipals.com/archives/303

P

Professional Learning Facilitates Growth

Learning is what most adults will do for a living in the 21st century.

—Bob Perelman

Think About It

What types of professional learning activities occur throughout the year in your school?

A key role of the principal is to recognize the importance of continued professional growth and learning for the staff. It is critical that the principal model a commitment to continuous improvement and be an active participant in professional learning activities.

Traditionally, professional learning focused on institutes, seminars, workshops, courses, conferences, and regional academies. Although those activities can support your professional learning, contemporary professional learning includes a wider variety of activities.

Key Lessons From Award-Winning Schools

Based on our research with schools that have won the U.S. Department of Education's Award for Staff Learning (Blackburn, 2000), we found seven key elements of effective professional learning.

Key Elements of Effective Professional Learning

1. Clear purpose linked to research, student data, goals, and needs
2. Accountability through classroom use of ideas and impact on students
3. Learning of a common, shared language
4. Shared decision making, which includes an emphasis on teacher input
5. Incorporation of relevant, practical, hands-on activities
6. Integration of opportunities for follow-up and application
7. Strong leadership and a positive, collegial atmosphere

First, you should have a clear purpose that is linked to research, student data, goals, and needs. Is there research to support what you plan? Is the planned initiative justified based on the data in terms of test scores, student surveys and feedback, or some other type of data? Does it align with the goals of your school? Finally, does it meet a need in your school?

The second key element is accountability in terms of classroom use and student results. Without accountability, you will likely not see a lasting impact. The first aspect of accountability is simple: How is the information learned actually used in the classroom? Interestingly, the teachers in the study were the strongest advocates of principals holding them accountable for classroom use.

For example, one teacher said, "My school allows me to go to conferences. However, when I came back no one held me accountable for what I had learned. If no one asks me what I learn and how I'm using it, then I'm not going to use it. Even the best ideas don't actually get translated into practice. When I come back from a conference I get hit with 500 other things." Next, consider student results. As an outcome of the planned professional learning, what do you actually see in terms of the impact on students? Once again, although this can include test scores, you may also see an impact through increased student engagement, fewer discipline referrals, or an increase in the amount of homework completed.

The third key element is the learning of a common shared language. When you use your professional learning to develop a consistent frame of reference on a topic, it helps provide a focus for all stakeholders.

Fourth, if you want to increase the effectiveness of your professional learning, create shared governance, which includes teacher input. This is more than just surveying teachers and asking them what they are interested in. Rather, create ways for teachers to be truly involved in the decision making that goes along with professional learning. One school we worked with chose to implement a professional learning committee that was in charge of the budget. As teachers began to decide how the money was allocated, the ownership increased.

The fifth key element is relevant and practical hands-on activities. Is the professional learning relevant to the stakeholders? Does it have a practical value that is perceived by all participants? Are staff allowed to interact in ways that increase engagement? We want to create professional learning activities that model best practices in the classroom.

The sixth element is follow-up. We know that if we plan a short, one-time activity, we will not see lasting results. How are you incorporating follow-up at every stage? What are the expectations for participants? Do you ask each teacher to complete an action plan? When we speak, we finish each session by asking participants to define one action they plan to complete when they return to their schools or classrooms.

Finally, strong leadership is crucial to any effective professional learning. However, this is not just administrative leadership. This also includes teacher leadership. But without your leadership, your plan will fail. One principal we met provided an avenue for building teacher leadership for professional learning in his school. Instead of having two regular faculty meetings each month, he used one for professional learning for teachers. Teachers could share what they had learned at a conference, something they had read, or a new strategy they were implementing in their classroom. Although it took time, teachers became comfortable sharing their own practice, and they soon began asking for the second meeting.

Directly linked to leadership are the positive attitudinal elements in the school. How open are you, your administrators, and teachers to sharing learning? What is the willingness factor, the desire to work collaboratively around a common goal? This truly reflects the culture of your school (see Chapter H: How to Impact School Culture) and is a direct result of your leadership in this area.

Collaborative Professional Learning Activities

The five professional learning models described below share some attributes. They are far more collaborative than traditional models and they value the professional learning that results from participation. Like most things, each has advantages and disadvantages. It is important to select a strategy that allows you to maintain momentum on achieving your school's vision, and one that matches the resources you have available.

There are five strategies we've found particularly useful when working with groups: book study groups, looking at student work, learning walks, instructional rounds, and a lesson study.

Book Study

A good way to engage people in their own professional growth is to organize a book study group. At some schools, every teacher is asked to read the same book and work in small groups to discuss the book and its implications for practice. At other schools, teachers may choose from several books and join colleagues who selected the same book for their discussion. The Book Study Protocol below contains guidelines for conducting a book study.

Book Study Protocol

- Membership should be voluntary, but inclusive.
- Decide a meeting schedule, meeting place, length of book to be read, and what will happen after the book is read. It is recommended that meetings last no more than one hour and be held at a consistent time and place.
- Select a responsible facilitator to keep the group on task and help manage the meetings.
- Select a book with a clear objective in mind. For example, use *Rigor Is NOT a Four-Letter Word* (2013) with teachers to launch the conversation about rigor or use *Rigorous Schools and Classrooms: Leading the Way* (2011) with school leaders or your school improvement team.
- Conversation is important in a book study. Members of the group share insights, ask questions about the text, and learn from others. It is important to talk about how the ideas can be applied directly in the classroom and how to overcome any potential obstacles.
- Journaling is a useful way for members to think about their reading and reflect on how it might be used.

Looking at Student Work

A powerful way to improve your school's instructional program is to look at authentic student work. In many schools, teams of teachers, either at the departmental, course, or grade level, examine student work as a way to clarify their own standards for that work, to strengthen common expectations for students, or to align curriculum across faculty.

Because looking at student work significantly alters the norms of a school, it works best where the faculty is comfortable sharing their work and revealing artifacts about their classroom practice. The Annenberg Institute for School Reform suggests several preliminary steps:

Looking at Student Work Protocol

- Talk together about the process and how to ensure it is not evaluative.
- Identify ways to gather relevant contextual information (e.g., copy of assignment, scoring guide or rubric).
- Select a protocol or guideline for the conversation that promotes discussion and interaction. See www.lasw.org for several different protocols.
- Agree on how to select work samples.
- Establish a system for providing and receiving feedback that is constructive.

Learning Walks

A learning walk is a form of instructional walkthrough, but one that is typically organized and led by teachers. Learning walks are not evaluative and not designed for individual feedback, but instead they help participants learn about instruction and identify areas of strength as well as need.

Learning walks provide a "snapshot" of the instructional program at your school. Since participants are in classrooms for only a short time, they should not draw conclusions about individual teachers or classes.

One school in Los Angeles held learning walks each month. Groups of teachers conducted the walks looking for evidence of the use of research-based instructional practices described in *Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement* (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001).

Learning Walks

1. Work with your staff to identify the purpose of the learning walk.
2. Determine the process, including length of classroom visits as well as what will occur during the visits. Develop and use a consistent tool for participants to use to record their observations and collect data.
3. Inform staff when the learning walks will occur.
4. Conduct a prewalk orientation for those participating.
5. Conduct the learning walk and spend no more than five minutes in each classroom. Depending on the lesson, talk with the teacher and students, look at student work, and examine the organization of the classroom.
6. Immediately after the walk, ask participants to meet and talk about the information they gathered and how to share it with the faculty. They may develop questions that they would ask to learn more about what is occurring.
7. Develop a plan for sharing the information and for using it to guide your continued school improvement work.

Additional information about conducting a learning walk is available at www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/walk/ImplementationGuide.pdf.

Instructional Rounds

Organized like rounds among medical interns, a group of teachers, administrators, or both visit classrooms to gather data about an instructional topic they previously identified. The purpose is not evaluative and the focus is on observing teachers, so that participants can think about how to improve their own teaching. One of the major benefits is the discussion among staff that follow the rounds as well as each teacher's own self-reflection (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). More information about Instructional Rounds is available at www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/feb11/vol68/num05/Making-the-Most-of-Instructional-Rounds.aspx

Lesson Study

Originally used by Japanese teachers, lesson study emphasizes working in small groups to plan, teach, observe, and critique a lesson. Lesson

study involves groups of teachers in a collaborative process designed to systematically examine their practice, with the goal of becoming more effective.

Lesson Study Protocol

- Participants should be volunteers, but the invitation to participate should be inclusive.
- While working on a study lesson, teachers work together to develop a detailed plan for the lesson.
- One member of the group teaches the lesson in a real classroom, while other members of the group observe the lesson.
- The group comes together to discuss their observations about the lesson and student learning.
- The group works together to revise the lesson.
- Another teacher teaches the revised lesson while group members observe.
- The group reconvenes to discuss the observed lesson.
- The revision process may continue as long as the group believes it is necessary.
- Teachers talk about what the study lesson taught them and how they can apply the learning to their own classroom. They may prepare a report to be shared with others.

Additional information about conducting a lesson study is available from Teachers College at Columbia University (www.tc.columbia.edu/lessonstudy/). The site includes tools for conducting a lesson study and for lesson design (www.tc.columbia.edu/lessonstudy/tools.html).

A Final Note

Contemporary professional learning is a tool to effect change, to improve student learning, and to build collegial relationships. Moving from a traditional, scattered approach of isolated activities to a focus on coordinated strategies to support individual and collective change is the hallmark of effective professional learning. Your modeling of active learning and engagement and facilitation of effective activities is critical.

Skills for Principals

- Support job-embedded, standards-based professional learning focused on improving teaching and learning.
- Ensure that professional learning addresses the need to meet the diverse learning needs of every student.
- Guide and monitor individual professional learning plans.
- Focus school-based professional learning activities on continuous improvement of teaching and learning.
- Provide support, time, and resources for teachers and other staff to engage in professional learning activities.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

Job-Embedded Professional Development by Sally Zepeda.

Professional Development: What Works by Sally Zepeda.

This 10-minute radio show with host Larry Ferlazzo and guest Rick Wormeli focuses on the "Do's and Don't's of Effective Professional Development": http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/2015/04/29/the-dos-and-donts-of-effective-professional-development-is-focus-of-my-new-bam-show/

Learning Forward offers the most comprehensive site of resources related to effective professional learning (includes the national standards for professional learning): www.learningforward.org/

Q

Quality Teacher Evaluation

Criticism, like rain, should be gentle enough to nourish a man's growth without destroying his roots.

—Frank A. Clark

Think About It

What is the purpose of teacher evaluation?

One of the most important jobs of a principal is teacher evaluation. Every school district has policies and procedures on the evaluation of teachers that are shaped by appropriate state law and local collective bargaining agreements. Teacher evaluation systems address the needs of two types of teachers—nontenured or probationary teachers and tenured faculty. Although specific requirements may differ, every state has a system of tenure for teachers. Similarly, the requirements for evaluating the performance of nontenured teachers are unique to each state.

Generally, nontenured teachers are evaluated every year while in probationary status. Most states require multiple observations, formative feedback to the teacher during the year, and a summative evaluation toward the end of the year. After receiving tenure, teachers may not be evaluated every school year. This will vary from district to district or state to state. The schedule

of activities associated with the evaluation may be substantially different from that of a nontenured teacher.

Role of the Instructional Leader

There is no more important role for a principal than instructional leader. The principal is responsible for ensuring a strong instructional program at his or her school, but the principal is not the only person responsible for instructional leadership. Teachers deliver instruction and have expertise in curricular and instructional issues. The principal's role is to ensure a school climate that encourages collaborative work and is focused on providing every student with a high-quality educational experience.

Throughout this book, we have described tools that principals can use to foster such a climate. Chapter H describes the attributes of a positive school culture and Chapter I discusses instructional leadership.

Principals can do several things to ensure a school climate supportive of quality instruction:

Ensuring a School Climate Supportive of Quality Instruction

- Communicate a clear vision for a high-quality instructional program.
- Focus all school initiatives on improving teaching and learning.
- Ensure an orderly, serious, and focused school setting.
- Recognize the importance of collegial dialogue and discussion in improving instructional practice.
- Provide support and obtain resources for instructional improvement.
- Stay current on educational trends and developments and become knowledgeable about best practices.
- Recognize and celebrate academic success to reinforce a school culture supportive of improved teaching and learning.

Purposes of Evaluation

One of the challenges for principals is to balance the procedural requirements of local policy (number of observations, conferences, and written reports) with the desire to use an evaluation system that engages teachers in a reflective analysis of their teaching and promotes teacher growth.

In general, evaluation must be used as a tool to improve the performance of teachers. It should be guided by several beliefs:

Beliefs About Teacher Evaluation as a Tool for Improvement

- Recognize strengths and reinforce continued use of those practices.
- Provide specific feedback about areas for growth.
- Provide specific suggestions for ways to improve.
- Provide time and opportunity to improve performance.
- Provide resources (professional development, mentor, materials) to support growth.

Occasionally, growth does not happen. When that occurs, principals must be very attentive to the procedural deadlines in local district policies, state law, and the collective bargaining agreement. Failure to meet a deadline can result in the teacher continuing to teach for another year. Additional information about employment decisions may be found in Chapter F: Finding the Right People.

Evaluation is a procedural requirement embedded in state law and/or local policy and contractual language. It is important to follow all of the procedural requirements, but evaluating teacher performance also provides an opportunity to engage in conversations about teaching that allow teachers to think about their work and identify ways to continue to improve their teaching.

Teacher Practice

There are several descriptions of effective teacher practice. They include Hunter's direct instruction model (1982), Bloom's taxonomy, and Danielson's (2013) framework for teaching. The Danielson model has been used in many states to revise teacher evaluation systems.

The Danielson model includes four dimensions of teaching: (1) planning and preparation, (2) the classroom environment, (3) instruction, and (4) professional responsibility. The following table identifies some of the major characteristics of each dimension. A complete rubric is included in Danielson's *The Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument* (2013).

Danielson's Four Teaching Dimensions

Planning and preparation	■ knowledge of content, ■ pedagogy, ■ resources, ■ instruction, and ■ assessment

(*Continued*)

(*Continued*)

Classroom environment	■ management of student behavior, ■ classroom space, ■ classroom procedures, and ■ creation of a classroom culture characterized by respect and rapport
Instruction	■ skill at communicating, ■ asking questions, ■ leading discussion, ■ engaging students in the lesson, ■ providing feedback, and ■ being flexible and responsive
Professional responsibility	■ committed to reflecting on their practice, ■ growing professionally, ■ communicating with families, ■ maintaining accurate records, ■ contributing to the school and district, and ■ being professional in their work

Adapted from: Danielson (2013)

Professional Learning and Teacher Growth

Teacher evaluation is a requirement in all states and districts. The periodic evaluation provides a snapshot look at teacher performance. These evaluations provide the basis for decisions about continued employment and the granting of tenure.

Principals are responsible for creating a climate in which professional learning and continued professional growth are central to the work of all teachers. Danielson and McGreal (2000) identified five factors that contribute to professional learning. They include opportunities for reflection on current practice, collaboration with other teachers and with administrators, opportunities for self-assessment and self-directed inquiry, the creation of a community of learners, and formative assessment.

Factors That Contribute to Professional Learning

Factor	Example
Reflection on practice	■ Structured reflection as part of evaluation system ■ Open-ended responses as part of assessment of all professional development activities
Collaboration	■ Team, content, and grade-level meetings focused on professional work ■ Process for looking at student work
Self-assessment and self-directed inquiry	■ Protocol for self-assessment of teaching practices ■ Self-assessment component to supervision and evaluation procedures ■ Identification of areas for professional study and growth
Community of learners	■ Study groups ■ Opportunity for peer observation ■ Team, content, and grade-level meetings ■ Critical friends program
Formative Assessment	■ Feedback that includes specific advice about strengthening practice ■ Discussion about practice that is not judgmental but focused on professional growth

Each of these factors is influenced by the principal through the organization of the school (its schedule, planning time, and climate)—openness to new ideas, an emphasis on professional dialogue and discussion, and a commitment to professional growth.

Glickman et al. (2013) suggest that effective supervision is characterized by seven factors. Central to effective supervision is the recognition that teachers are adults and respond well to adult learning strategies. Teachers are also at different phases of their career, and their supervisory needs will vary. For example, there are vast differences between a novice teacher in his or her first year of teaching and a veteran teacher recognized for his or her skilled instructional capacities.

The Effective Supervisor . . .

- Understands that teachers are adults and respond well to the principles of adult learning
- Recognizes that all teachers are not at the same stage of their career and should not be treated alike
- Supports the needs of teachers at different stages of their career cycle
- Helps teachers to understand and learn from their teaching and from career events
- Accommodates the varied roles of teachers
- Considers the sociocultural context of the teaching
- Is empowering and motivating

Adapted from: Glickman et al. (2013)

Formative or Summative

There are two types of teacher evaluations—formative and summative. Observations of teachers that are designed to provide feedback and to promote teacher growth are formative. When the principal must prepare a formal written document describing a teacher's performance, that is summative.

Conducting multiple observations of a teacher is always a good idea. Relying on a single observation or event as a source of data about teacher performance is inappropriate. Talking with the teacher about each observation and providing feedback about his or her teaching is part of the formative evaluation process.

Another way to think of it is that the formative process is designed to engage the teacher in a discussion and dialogue about his or her work, providing an opportunity for professional growth. The summative process is designed to check for results and measure a teacher's performance.

Supervision or Evaluation

Every year principals are expected to formally evaluate many of the teachers in their school. As mentioned earlier, state law or local policy will decide the exact process.

While some teachers may be formally evaluated, the principal should be supervising all teaching staff. Sally Zepeda described this work as "the most important work a supervisor does" (2012, p. 1). The role is to engage all

teachers in a process in which they reflect on their teaching, collaborate with others, and grow professionally.

Instructional supervision is quite different from teacher evaluation. A timeline for observations and completion of evaluation documents usually guides an evaluation process. Supervision, on the other hand, is not a linear process.

Instructional supervision is intended to involve teachers in examining their own practices and, with support from colleagues and supervisor, to strengthen and improve their practice.

Supervision vs. Evaluation

Supervision		Evaluation
■ Supervisor, peers	Who	■ Administrator
■ Ongoing	Timing	■ Legal, contractual timelines
■ Improve learning, teaching, curriculum, and classroom management ■ Focused on problem solving	Purpose	■ Quality control ■ Measurement of performance against identified standards
■ Derived from the teacher ■ Dialogue ■ Collaborative	Sources of data	■ Overt ■ Identified in law or policy ■ Often negotiated
■ Focus on professional growth ■ Remains with the parties	Use of data	■ Evaluation form ■ Personnel file
■ Teacher ■ Focused on self-reflection and growth	Who makes judgment	■ Administrator
■ Collegial, look together at issues ■ Facilitative ■ Guide discussion	Role of observer	■ Line/staff relationship ■ Power and control

Three-Step Model

One of the most prominent models for promoting teacher growth is called the clinical supervision model. First suggested in the mid-1960s (Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer, 1969), most district requirements for teacher evaluation incorporate some variation of the approach. It is also a model frequently used to engage teachers in reflection on their teaching, a formative process.

The model is built around three components—a planning or pre-observation conference, observation, and a post-observation conference. The approach includes three phases: planning, observation, and analysis and reflection.

Clinical Supervision Model

Components	Phases
Planning or Pre-observation Conference	Planning
Observation	Observation
Post-observation Conference	Analysis and Reflection

Planning or Pre-Observation Conference

During this step, the teacher and administrator meet to discuss the lesson being taught during the observation. It also provides an opportunity for the teacher to share any contextual information about prior instruction or about students in the class.

Conditions for Success

- Meet at a mutually agreed upon time and in a mutually agreed upon location.
- Presume positive intentions.
- Ask clarifying questions in order to understand the context (students, prior lessons, where this lesson fits into the curriculum) and the planned lesson.
- Arrange seating around a table or in way that promotes conversation; avoid sitting behind your desk.
- Avoid distractions—put all calls, pagers, or beepers on hold.
- Listen attentively and authentically.

Most important, the planning conference should include a conversation to identify the focus of the observation. Central to the clinical supervision model is the premise that the teacher can analyze and reflect on his or her own teaching. Part of that reflection is to identify the focus of the observation and to identify a tool the administrator will use to collect data about the lesson.

Discussion Prompts

- "Thank you for meeting today to talk about the upcoming visit to your class. In order to plan for that visit I would like to talk with you about your students, the lesson you plan, and ways in which I may be of help to you during the observation."
- "I always enjoy the opportunity to visit classrooms. What sort of data can I collect during my visit that would be helpful to you?"
- "Tell me about your students. What is important for me to know about them? Their learning?"
- "Talk with me about the curriculum for your class. What skills have you been working on? How is this lesson connected to prior learning?"

For example, one elementary teacher wanted data about the distribution of response opportunities among her students. The principal agreed to use a seating chart of the room to chart the number of times that the teacher called on or interacted with each student throughout the lesson. The result was a visual map of teacher–student interactions during the observation.

Key Steps of the Pre-Observation Conference

- Decide the focus of the observation.
- Determine the method and form of observation.
- Set the time of the observation and post-observation conference.

Observation

Throughout the observation, the administrator gathers data about the focus area agreed to during the planning conference. You should be clear about the tool to be used to gather data. Your goal is for the teacher to be comfortable with the instrument used during the visit. Ideally, you have

shared the form or tool with the teacher in advance of the observation. At the end of the observation, verify the meeting time and location for the post-observation conference, begin to analyze the data, and think about the questions that you will use during the conference to elicit teacher reflection and thinking about their lesson.

Key Steps of the Observation

- Conduct the observation.
- Verify the post-observation conference time and offer the teacher a copy of the data.
- Analyze the facts of the observation.
- Choose an approach to use during the post-observation conference.

Post-Observation Conference

The post-observation conference provides an opportunity for the administrator to meet with the teacher and have a conversation about the observation.

Conditions for Success

- Meet at a mutually agreed upon time and in a mutually agreed upon location.
- Presume positive intentions.
- Ask clarifying questions in order to understand the lesson and the teacher's thinking about both the design and the delivery of the lesson.
- Summarize and identify appropriate next steps.
- Arrange seating around a table or in way that promotes conversation; avoid sitting behind your desk.
- Avoid distractions—put all calls, pagers, or beepers on hold.
- Listen attentively and authentically; use paraphrasing to indicate that you are listening and understand what has been said.

This should provide an opportunity for the teacher to reflect on the data collected in the focus area and for the teacher to analyze and think about his

or her teaching. The meeting should conclude with agreement on a plan to follow up and appropriate next steps.

Discussion Prompts

- "Thank you for meeting with me today. I would like to spend some time talking with you about the lesson."
- "Let's talk about your planning. When you plan a lesson, what are the things that you consider in its design?"
- "What strategies do you use to ensure that each lesson is linked to students' prior learning?"
- "Describe for me the ways you monitor whether or not your students are learning what you are teaching."
- "Talk me through the process you use to plan a lesson. What do you consider? How do you proceed?"
- "Occasionally, I'm in the middle of a lesson, and I know it is not working the way I would like. When that happens to you, how do you adjust your teaching? What data/information do you use to guide adjustments?"
- "When you teach this lesson again, what adjustments might you make in its design?"
- "Talk with me about the strengths of this lesson. What would you describe as its strengths? What evidence do you have to support these strengths?"
- "Let's spend a few minutes analyzing this lesson. How do you critique the lesson and its implementation?"
- "Let's think about next steps. What additional support can I provide for you and your teaching? What data can I collect? During my next visit, on what area of instruction would you like me to focus?"
- Note: This process should appropriately be modified for a less experienced teacher or one with performance concerns.

It is easy to shortcut this aspect of the process, particularly with stronger teachers, but it is a critical part of the reflective process and should receive its due attention. Often your most skilled teachers are most interested in an opportunity to reflect on their teaching and consider ways to continue to grow professionally.

Key Steps of the Post-Observation Conference

- Share the data and elicit the teacher's thinking about the lesson.
- Reflect on the teacher's comments so that you are clear on his or her thinking.
- Begin to think together about ways to refine the lesson. Focus on the things that should be affirmed and continued as well as things that might be modified.
- Problem solve through a discussion of the ideas and options.
- Agree on a plan and follow-up.

A Final Note

Teacher evaluation is another valuable tool for a principal. It allows you to focus on growth and models a continual need for reflection and improvement. Balance the procedural demands with a focus on collaborative analysis.

Skills for Principals

- Focus conversations with teachers on improving teaching and learning.
- Recognize the value of reflection to the professional growth of school personnel.
- Conduct personnel evaluations that enhance professional practice while following district and state policies.
- Utilizes a variety of strategies to lead people in examining deeply held assumptions and beliefs about teaching and learning.
- Model lifelong learning by continually deepening understanding and practice related to content standards, curricular requirements, instructional practice, assessment, and research-based best practices.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

Getting Teacher Evaluation Right: What Really Matters for Effectiveness and Improvement by Linda Darling Hammond.

Teacher Evaluation That Makes a Difference: A New Model for Teacher Growth and Student Achievement by Robert Marzano and Michael D. Toth.

This article describes what principals look for in teacher evaluations: www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin400_b.shtml

This article by Charlotte Danielson describes evaluations that help teachers learn: www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/dec10/vol68/num04/Evaluations-That-Help-Teachers-Learn.aspx

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R

Recognizing the Law

Good people do not need laws to tell them to act responsibly, while bad people will find a way around the laws.

—Plato

Think About It

Which of these issues cause you the most concern: sexual harassment, religion, or privacy concerns?

Much of what a principal does has legal implications. We won't cover everything here, but we will focus on three areas that can impact your job and consume your time if you're not aware of the legal guidance. Elsewhere in this book, we look at the legal aspects of student discipline (Chapter E), special populations, including students with disabilities (Chapter S), and social media (Chapter J).

Three Legal Areas

1. Sexual Harassment
2. Issues of Church and State
3. Family Right to Privacy Act

Sexual Harassment

One of the most common areas of litigation deals with sexual harassment. The relevant law for most cases is Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Under these rules, no individual may be discriminated against on the basis of gender in any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance, which includes virtually all public schools in the country.

School personnel must be aware of the legal requirements for preventing sexual harassment, whether the situation is student to student, adult to student, or adult to adult. There are two recognized types of sexual harassment: quid pro quo and hostile environment.

Quid pro quo literally means to give something in exchange for something. In this scenario, there is an exchange, which most often involves sexual favors. Examples include a teacher exchanging a grade for some sexual favor or one student expecting a sexual favor from another student in exchange for providing protection at school.

The second kind of sexual harassment is called "hostile environment." A hostile environment may exist when conditions create a sexually charged atmosphere or when the work of one person, employee, or student is negatively affected because of the sexual tension present.

School personnel need to work to prevent sexual harassment, because the U.S. Supreme Court has found that school personnel may be personally liable if they know about such harassment and fail to intervene to end it. In *Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education* (1999), the Court found that the deliberate indifference of teachers and administrators in an elementary school interfered with the educational opportunity of a female student when a male student repeatedly harassed her.

There are four key principles related to sexual harassment that must be considered:

1. It is gender neutral. The courts have found that in addition to harassing someone of the opposite gender, people can also harass members of the same gender.
2. Failure to act can result in personnel liability for school personnel.
3. It is important to provide "notice" to students, parents, and school personnel about sexual harassment, what to do if they experience it, who to talk with, and what they can expect from the school.
4. There is a requirement for action called an appropriate "standard of care."

Two types of sexual harassment can result in liability for individual teachers and principals, as well as their school district. First, there is teacher-to-student sexual harassment. The Supreme Court found in *Franklin v. Gwinnett County Public Schools* that sexual harassment by a teacher constituted a form of discrimination and that monetary damages could be collected from the district. Principals have a responsibility to act immediately to investigate any alleged acts of sexual harassment. Failure to act can result in liability.

Next, there is peer sexual harassment, or student-to-student harassment. In this situation, the guiding case is *Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education,* in which a fifth-grade girl was sexually harassed by a male classmate. The girl and her parents complained to at least two teachers and the principal after the incidents. The lawsuit claimed that the school district had failed to act to prevent the harassment after being notified. This failure, in their view, created a hostile environment that inhibited the student's ability to learn. The Supreme Court ruled that when a school district acts with deliberate indifference to known acts of harassment in its programs and activities, that school district can be held monetarily liable.

In cases of alleged sexual harassment, there are two questions to consider:

1. Did school personnel act with deliberate indifference?
2. Was the harassment so severe that it barred the victim from access to an educational opportunity? (Did it interfere with his or her learning? Did it make him or her feel unsafe?)

As a principal, your first step is to set a positive example. Have a no-tolerance policy for behavior that may be offensive. Don't assume that everyone will interpret your words or actions the same way or that jokes or gestures are harmless or inoffensive. Remember, sexual harassment depends on how the person being harassed is affected, not on the harasser's intent.

Sexual harassment may be verbal, nonverbal, or physical, and sexual harassment is gender neutral. People of the same gender can sexually harass one another. Stay alert to the nonverbal cues of those in your school community.

Finally, investigate all complaints about sexual harassment. Never ignore sexual harassment, no matter how you personally feel about the situation. Throughout the process, be supportive of people who are being sexually harassed. Remember, your behavior sets the tone for your building.

Steps a School Can Take to Prevent Sexual Harassment

- Develop and publicize a sexual harassment policy that clearly states that sexual harassment will not be tolerated and explains what types of conduct are considered sexual harassment.
- Develop and publicize a specific grievance procedure for resolving complaints of sexual harassment.
- Develop methods to inform new teachers, guidance counselors, staff, students, and administrators of the school's sexual harassment policy and grievance procedure.
- Conduct periodic sexual harassment awareness training for all school staff, including teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators.
- Conduct periodic age-appropriate sexual harassment awareness training for students.
- Establish discussion groups for both male and female students in which students can talk about what sexual harassment is and how to respond to it in the school setting.
- Survey students to find out whether any sexual harassment is occurring at the school.
- Conduct periodic sexual harassment awareness training for parents of elementary and secondary students.
- Work with parents and students to develop and implement age-appropriate, effective measures for addressing sexual harassment.

Source: U.S. Office of Civil Rights

Religion and the Schools

A second issue that is increasingly controversial is religion in the schools. According to the establishment clause of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution as interpreted by the Supreme Court in *Lemon v. Kurtzman* (1971), in order to be constitutional, a practice must have a secular purpose and must neither advance nor inhibit excessive governmental entanglement between government and religion.

Prayer in Schools

School-sponsored prayer has been ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in a series of cases. That includes formal prayers at the beginning of

the day, before assemblies, and prior to sporting events. Public schools cannot be seen as endorsing a particular religious point of view. Schools must remain neutral on the issue of religion.

It is important to remember that the limits apply to activities that are conducted by the school. Individual students may continue to pray on their own and can talk about their personal religious beliefs. Occasionally, an individual student's right to practice his or her own religious beliefs may be limited if it infringes on other students' education by disrupting the school environment. For example, if a student wishes to proselytize about his or her beliefs during class, that might be considered disruptive and could be limited because it infringes on the ability of other students to learn.

Student Groups or Organizations

The Equal Access Act (EAA), passed by Congress in 1984 and upheld by the Supreme Court in 1990, created a requirement of access to school facilities for "non-curriculum-related" student groups outside the instructional day. This has been interpreted to mean activities held before and after school, during lunch, and during activity periods.

The EAA says that schools create a "limited public forum" when they allow non-curriculum-related groups to meet and use their facilities. A school that allows non-curriculum-related groups to meet under these circumstances cannot deny access or discriminate against groups based on religious, political, philosophical, or other speech content. Religious clubs or other religious student-led activities can only be prohibited if all other non-curriculum-based clubs are prohibited.

In 1993, the Supreme Court declared that religious speech was fully protected under the First Amendment and that school districts cannot engage in "viewpoint discrimination." This decision and others make it permissible to allow religious groups to rent and use public school facilities, as long as those facilities are open to other groups wanting to hold meetings.

Guidelines for Principals

According to the U.S. Department of Education, there are six specific actions that schools can take to provide an environment that is respectful of students' religious beliefs without being intolerant of different religious points of view.

School-Based Actions

- The school's harassment policy should include protection from religious harassment.
- Teachers and administrators should not support or participate in forms of student religious activities, including flagpole meetings or group prayer sessions.
- Free speech is not an absolute right; the government can, to some degree, control the time, place, and manner of expression.
- Schools may designate certain locations in the building for forms of student expression, including the distribution of literature.
- Schools may teach about religion or its role in art, history, philosophy, music, and so forth.
- Schools should include religion in their diversity statement to ensure that all religions and religious beliefs are given equal protection and recognition.

Student Privacy

The Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA) is designed to protect the privacy rights of students and their educational records. Under FERPA, "educational records" are those records, files, documents, and other materials that (1) contain information directly related to the student, and (2) are maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a person acting for such agency or institution. The major point is that educational records must be kept confidential and teachers, staff, and administrators are not to talk inappropriately about students and their families at work or outside of work.

Key Ideas from FERPA

- Parents have access to their child's educational records.
- Once students reach age 18, they control their records.
- A parent or eligible student can challenge content and request amendments.
- A parent or eligible student controls the distribution of records, including sending them to schools outside the current school district, but a district can send records if a parent or eligible student is notified.

(*Continued*)

(*Continued*)

- Certain directory information can be released (name, address, date of birth, major, picture, degrees, and awards) without parental consent, but certain types of information must be designated and parents provided a reasonable period of time to inform the agency that this information cannot be released.

There are some things that you as a principal can do to make sure your school complies with this law. First, talk with your teachers about the requirements of the law. For example, teachers should not post student grades with names, should not talk about students or families outside of school, and should not post things on social media about students or families. This includes photos that might be attached to a social media post. Second, make sure that the office staff who register students are familiar with the requirements and don't release any information without the required release. Finally, recognize that both biological parents have access to a student's records and may participate in teacher–parent conferences. If a parent has remarried or has a significant other, they are only entitled to access if they have adopted the child. Only with a court order barring the release of such information can you refuse to provide access to a noncustodial parent.

A Final Note

Legal issues can consume major blocks of your time, particularly if you unintentionally violate the law. Understanding what is permissible within the law, then following the law, will streamline your job.

Skills for Principals

- Model personal and professional ethics, integrity, justice, and fairness and expect the same of others.
- Protect the rights and confidentiality of students and staff.
- Respect and follow the law.
- Behave in a trustworthy manner and use professional influence and authority to improve education and the common good.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

Principals Teaching the Law: 10 Legal Lessons Your Teachers Need to Know by David M. Schimmel, Suzanne Eckles, and Matthew Milletello.

The Principal's Quick-Reference Guide to School Law: Reducing Liability, Litigation, and Other Potential Legal Tangles by Robert F. Hachiya, Robert J. Shoop, and Dennis R. Dunklee.

This site provides official information on FERPA: www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html

This is a blog on school law: http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/school_law/

S

Serving Special Populations

We are all different, which is great because we are all unique. Without diversity, life would be very boring.

—Catherine Pulsifer

Think About It

What special populations do you serve in your school?

Both federal law and many states' laws provide protection for groups of students. Those groups are called "classes," which are groups of students who share a demographic characteristic. Generally, the laws and subsequent court decisions say that any protected class cannot be disproportionately affected by a school policy, program, or practice. For example, any program that limits accessibility for students in one of the protected classes would not be permitted. The Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution declares that no state shall deny any person within its jurisdiction equal protection of the laws. Because school districts are subdivisions of the state, the amendment is applicable to the district and schools within the district.

Special Populations or Classes of Students

- Race
- Linguistic minorities
- Immigration status
- Homeless status
- Gender
- Disability

Race

Race is one of the protected classes. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 bars discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin for organizations receiving federal financial assistance, which includes virtually all school districts. The Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 guarantees public school students equal educational opportunity without regard to race, color, sex, or national origin. The key point: School programs, policies, and services cannot discriminate against students based on race, color, or national origin.

English as a Second Language—Linguistic Minorities

Another one of the protected classes is a student who does not speak English. The case *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) affirmed their right to receive educational services. Their rights are protected by the Fourteenth Amendment and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The U.S. Supreme Court decided that there is no requirement to provide instruction in the student's native language.

Immigration Status

Students who are not legal immigrants are also protected. In *Plyler v. Doe* (1982), the Supreme Court found that they are protected by the Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment and that schools cannot deny enrollment based on immigration status.

Homeless Status

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act (2001) protects students who are homeless. School districts must enroll such students and cannot have programs that "stigmatize or segregate students based on homeless status." Homeless students must also be provided transportation to and from school.

Gender

Because gender is one of the protected classes, a school's programs, policies, and practices cannot discriminate based on gender. Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1972 is often thought of as applying to athletic opportunities, but it has much broader applications. For example, it also relates to single-gender schools and classrooms, to school clubs and activities, and to individual classes available to students. The Fourteenth Amendment also provides due process protections for students when gender discrimination is an issue. Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1972 prohibits gender discrimination in institutions receiving federal financial assistance. It permits the separation of students by gender on sports teams within contact sports.

The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 also protects female students from discrimination based on pregnancy status. Schools may offer alternative programs for pregnant students, but they cannot compel attendance in those programs by pregnant students.

In 2007, the U.S. Department of Education revised its rules on single-gender schools and single-gender classes. They are permissible, but schools must ensure that every student, regardless of gender, has access to comparable programs. For example, if a school district has a single-gender program in math and science, there must be a program for both males and females.

Students With Disabilities

The key legislation related to handicapping conditions is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004). This federal law requires states receiving federal educational funds to provide educational services to students with specific disabilities. The law requires that parents must be active

partners and must agree to all testing and placement of students. Individual states develop their own rules and regulations for implementing the federal law.

Key Ideas of IDEA

- Students with disabilities are entitled to a free and appropriate public education. That means that schools must provide programs that meet their needs at no cost to the family.
- Individualized Education Plans (IEP) are required for all handicapped students. That means that each qualifying student must have an education plan that addresses his or her individual educational needs. Schools cannot limit options to programs that are currently offered, nor can schools place students into programs that are not identified in their IEP. Parents are part of the process of identifying educational plans and must agree to the plan.
- Students must be placed in the least restrictive environment. There is no legal requirement that students be placed in inclusive settings. However, students cannot be placed in self-contained classrooms when an inclusive setting would better meet their needs.
- Students stay in their current setting or placement until an agreement is reached in a new IEP for placement in a new setting. This is called the "stay-put" requirement.
- Students with disabilities are entitled to related services such as transportation, social work, or occupational therapy if they are identified in their IEP.

A related law, the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, provides for the needs of students who require educational support because of an identified handicapping condition. It does not have the same requirements as IDEA for identification and service to students. Because the law is not very explicit, local districts develop their own plans. The key idea is that schools must accommodate students with handicaps that affect their education. For example, a student might need to sit close to the front of the room or might need to have additional time to complete assignments.

Finally, the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) has ramifications for schools. This federal law requires that physical facilities cannot limit the educational services available to students. Therefore, schools are required to ensure that all of their facilities are handicap accessible.

Legal Protections

Students with disabilities are guaranteed access to an appropriate educational program by several Supreme Court decisions and federal laws. The Individuals with Disabilities Educational Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004) is the prevailing federal law for students with disabilities in certain defined categories. Some of the law's protections include the following:

- Free and appropriate public education
- Least restrictive environment
- Related services such as transportation, health and nursing services, and psychological services
- Involvement of parents in all decisions about their child's program
- Development of an annual Individualized Education Plan that describes the program of services for that specific child

Discipline of Students With Disabilities

Principals can discipline students with disabilities if they follow the provisions of the child's Individualized Education Plan. If the student may be suspended from school for 10 days or less, no procedures beyond those provided other students are necessary. However, when suspension exceeds 10 cumulative days, it must be determined that the behavior leading to suspension was not a result of the child's disability. This is called a "manifestation determination hearing." If it is determined that the behavior and the disability are related, the IEP may be written to change the placement of the student. But, in all cases, the student's IEP is the guiding legal document.

Section 504

The Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is the other law that provides protections for students with disabilities. It provides for support and services to students who may not qualify under the IDEA but who have an identified disability. The specific services are not well defined in the law, and local policy often guides services to students. Most local districts have established a process for developing a 504 Plan for students who qualify for services.

Differences Between IDEA and Section 504

IDEA	Section 504
Student must qualify in one of 13 disability classifications	Three-part definition: Student must have (1) a physical or mental disability that (2) substantially limits (3) one or more "major life activities"
All students who are eligible under IDEA are also eligible under Section 504	Students can be eligible for Section 504 without being eligible for the specific protections of IDEA

A Final Note

Some of the most vulnerable students are those discussed in this chapter. It's critical that principals understand their rights to a public education and be an advocate for them with teachers, families, and community.

Skills for Principals

- Model respect for the rights of protected groups of students.
- Assure that teachers and other staff have current information about working with students in the protected groups.
- Advocate for the rights of protected classes of students.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

Working with Families of Children with Special Needs: *Family and Professional Partnerships and Roles* by Nancy Sileo and Mary Anne Prater.

Working with Challenging Parents of Students with Special Needs by Jean Cheng Gorman.

Details about the IDEA may be obtained at http://idea.ed.gov/

This article provides information for educators working with homeless students: www.nasponline.org/educators/HCHSIIHomeless.pdf

T

Teaming With Families and Community

Growth is never by mere chance; it is the result of forces working together.

—James Cash Penney

Think About It

As you think about the families of your students and the larger school community, how closely are they involved in the life of your school?

As a principal, you likely spend time working with parents and other family members of your students. Too often, much of that time is negative, coming after a major discipline problem or crisis. Another critical part of your job is leading a coordinated school-wide effort to interact with families in ways that support students, families, the school, and the larger community.

Every student in your building has a family and comes from a community, both of which influence the student. And teachers and administrators interact with families and the community every day—sometimes in direct ways, sometimes indirectly. Even if you do not live in the same community as your students, every family in that community likely knows who you are

as the principal of the school. Recently, in a high-poverty school, we noticed that the curriculum coordinator made several contacts with parents during a trip to the local grocery store. Parent involvement is more than a monthly meeting at the school; it is the sum of all your interactions with parents and family members of your students.

Joyce Epstein from the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at John Hopkins University synthesized the research on parent engagement.

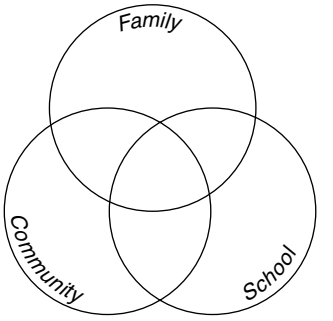
Synthesis of Research

- Just about all families care about their children and want them to succeed. They also want better information from their child's school so that they can be good partners with the school.
- Almost all teachers and administrators want to involve families, but many do not know how to go about building positive and productive partnerships with parents and families.
- Virtually all students at all levels—elementary, middle, and high school—want their families to be more engaged with their school and knowledgeable about the school's programs. Students say they are willing to be active partners in supporting communication between home and school. (Epstein, 2010)

Intuitively, we know that involving parents and family members in a partnership has a positive impact on our students. When parents are involved both at home and at school, students do better in school and stay in school longer. When a parent and teacher work together to help a student in a specific subject area, such as reading, students typically improve in that area. Students do best when their parents play four key roles related to their child's learning: teacher, supporter, advocate, and decision-maker.

There are also benefits for teachers. Teachers who involve parents have a more positive attitude about families and stereotype them less. There is growing evidence that well-designed programs and practices that incorporate the school, family, and community benefit students, families, and schools.

Time is a common roadblock to coordinated parent/family involvement. But a related issue is lack of knowledge or training. Few teachers or administrators are prepared to work with families and communities as partners in their children's education. However, if you are willing to make the time to talk with the families in your school and listen to their needs, then you have taken the first step to building an effective partnership.



Strengthening Family Engagement

It's important to remember that, just as you balance the common needs of all your students with specific, individual attention, you will need to do the same with the families in your school. The strategies that follow are applicable to all the families in your school, but you will need to customize specific activities within each strategy to best meet the needs of particular families or groups of families (Gorski, 2008; Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007; Olivos & Mendoza, 2010; Westmoreland, Rosenberg, Lopez, & Weiss, 2009).

Check Assumptions and Stereotypes

Be careful about assumptions and stereotypes about families. Most teachers and employees share a middle-class background and view the role of parents through their own experience. Recognize that a diverse parent community reflects a variety of values, beliefs about the role of parents and their relationship to school, and comfort in interacting with school personnel. Often Latino and poor families feel unwanted and unwelcome in their child's school. Be cautious about relying on training, books, and other resources that makes generalizations about poor families or families of diverse cultures. Do not organize your parent engagement program around majority, middle-class norms and values. A single approach to parent engagement will not succeed with all parents.

Build Trusting Relationships

Personal relationships are important when working with families. Many parents are more comfortable interacting with school personnel in smaller, more intimate settings where it may be possible to share information and

ask questions. Parents are often concerned about being dismissed due to language or cultural barriers. They are aware of the stereotypes present among school employees and other parents and may resist participating in parent activities where those stereotypes may be displayed. Identify ways to meet and talk with families at churches or community centers off campus. Your outreach must be culturally sensitive and specific to each cultural group. Similarly, parents of limited means share these concerns and resist participating in programs where involvement is measured by the economic resources you can contribute to the school.

You are likely to have new students who enter your school after the start of the year. Create a welcome wagon to greet new families and help them with the transition to a new school. Enlist other families to deliver a "Welcome to Our School" packet of key information that includes a personal note from you and other school personnel.

Finally, parents value a personal connection with the teacher and others in the school who work with their son or daughter, so encourage communication from all school personnel. Promote the use of personal notes, e-mails, and phone calls to build a strong connection with families.

Value Robust Two-Way Communication

All parents want to be active partners in their children's education. An important part of parent engagement is their sense of efficacy, believing that they can contribute to their child's education. The literature repeatedly discusses the importance of both learning from families about their children, as well as sharing information about their children's schooling with them. Too often school communication occurs just one way, school to family, and just about problems rather than successes. Parents, particularly parents of limited means, but also parents from diverse cultures, perceive that the school may not value their knowledge about their own child. They may resist sharing information that reinforces assumptions they believe school employees hold about their family and their child. Schools often create structures for parents to share information but those systems are built on middle-class norms about when and how to interact with the school.

Publish a family-friendly school newsletter on a regular, consistent basis. Be sure to share necessary information about the school, but also include topics of interest to parents. Be sensitive to the diversity in your community. Do you need to publish a version in a different language? The same holds true for other procedures. Print signs in your building in the languages spoken by school families. Do you need to establish bilingual hotlines and help

lines? If you have a large percentage of families who do not speak English as their native language, provide language training so that you and your teachers can communicate on a basic level with the family members.

It is also important to provide support and resources for the families of your students, although the specific types will vary depending on your specific population. Therefore, you must first understand your families and then match your resources to their needs.

One possibility is to create a family and community learning center. Find a physical space with adult-sized furnishings; then add basic refreshments and information helpful to parents. As you create a library of materials they can access, don't forget to have material that is written in appropriate language. You may need information written in a different language, such as Spanish, but you also may need to simplify the educational jargon in materials, realizing that your audience may not understand complicated terms.

Possible Resource Materials

- Information about free or inexpensive medical and dental resources, including immunizations
- Locations of libraries and local museums
- Brochures about the importance of balanced nutrition in student meals
- Public transportation schedules
- Books about child growth and development
- Brochures on parenting workshops
- Childcare providers
- Parent support groups
- Community mental health facilities

Another alternative is to create family support groups that deal with topics identified by parents and family members. You can then make the learning center available to these and other groups for meetings.

Finally, publicize what you are offering. Use your school newsletter and also include information on your school's social media accounts. Provide clear, inviting, noticeable directional signs. Keep some of the resource materials in the main office, with a note that more are available in the resource center. You can build a terrific center for families, but if no one uses it, you have wasted your time. Make sure those who need it the most know it exists.

Identify Authentic Opportunities to Learn from Families

Just as two-way communication is essential, so is creating opportunities for families of diverse backgrounds to share their knowledge and skills. Parents enjoy the opportunity to contribute their knowledge to the school's program. Don't rely on a parental engagement program based solely on fundraising or other resource-based programs. Many parents are eager for an opportunity to provide leadership. Seek opportunities for Latino parents and parents of limited means to participate in decision-making groups. That may require working with community leaders to identify parents comfortable with that role.

Also, provide ways for families to participate in meaningful decision-making roles. You will find that the different perspectives can add depth to your discussions, and family members will appreciate that you value their input. If you are attempting to implement a change in your school, their support will also be critical.

Another alternative is to craft volunteer opportunities that capitalize on family members' expertise, abilities, and interests. Be creative as you develop options that add to the typical volunteer activities found in most schools.

Volunteer Opportunities

- Be a guest speaker for classes
- Record audio versions of text materials to use with at-risk readers
- Co-sponsor interest clubs
- Create brochures and other marketing materials
- Help with specific classroom projects

Train Teachers and Other Staff

It's important to work with teachers and other staff to become knowledgeable about the diversity present in your school community. The most effective learning occurs when members of these diverse communities are part of the training. Their involvement makes the training more authentic and signals the community that you are committed to learning about and respecting the diversity present in your school. As stated earlier, do not rely on a single book or training session to form generalizations about poor or Latino families. Those materials may only reinforce negative assumptions and stereotypes.

Develop and Implement a Plan

Improving parent engagement requires an intentional plan of action. Good intentions are noble, but a systematic, sustained commitment requires planning and resource allocation. The best plans are developed with parents and community. Current governance structures like the School Improvement Team or the parent–teacher organization may not adequately reflect the diversity of point of view central to a successful plan. Assure that your planning team is diverse and involves each group that will be part of the plan.

Seek ways to move beyond the doors of your school and support the larger community. You might identify opportunities for students to participate in community service activities. Or, choose to celebrate the cultures of your community with specific school programs. Collaborate with other agencies or groups in the area to create a framework for delivery of services, such as immunization clinics or dental and medical services. For example, an inner-city school in Jackson, Mississippi, partnered with local doctors to provide a free health screening day for all parents in the community. The only requirement was that they bring their school-age child with them. Parents received hundreds of dollars of services, the students participated in fun activities, and the bonds between the school, families, and community were strengthened tremendously.

A Final Note

Connecting with families can be time-consuming, but it is a priority that is critical to the long-term success of your school. Remember, you both have the same priority: the well-being and learning of the students in your school.

Skills for Principals

- Value the participation and contributions of families and the school community in ensuring school success.
- Promote understanding and appreciation of the school community's diverse cultural, social, and intellectual resources.
- Build positive relationships with families and caregivers.
- Ensure that school programs, policies, and practices support the critical role of families and caregivers in the educational success of students.
- Advocate for children, families, and caregivers within the school and in the larger school community.
- Build and sustain effective community partnerships that support the success of students.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools by Joyce L. Epstein.

Families, Schools, and Communities: Building Partnerships for Educating Children by Patricia Scully and Chandler Barbour.

This PDF provides practices for promoting family engagement: http://tinyurl.com/qa9yzw8

This PDF discusses the myth of the culture of poverty: http://tinyurl.com/3a7hsop

U

Under Pressure: School Safety

Plans are nothing; planning is everything.

—Dwight Eisenhower

Think About It

What is your planning process so that you are proactive about school safety?

School safety is an area that should never be taken for granted. In the best-case scenario, you have plans that ensure the safety and well-being of all students and faculty, and your school structures provide a secure climate. In the safest schools, there are contingency plans for every possibility, including crisis situations.

As a principal, your role is to provide leadership to ensure safety in all aspects of school life. Note our wording—provide leadership. With all of your responsibilities, you cannot plan every detail. To be an effective leader, it's important to share decision making with other stakeholders.

The Foundation

Begin by creating a School Safety Council. In addition to providing recommendations and making decisions, members of the council can assist with training of faculty and staff.

Suggested Representatives to the School Safety Council

- Principal (chair)
- School faculty/staff
- Students (where appropriate)
- Parents
- Community representatives
- Medical personnel
- Law enforcement representatives
- First responders

Your School Safety Council will be an important support structure as you assess your current status and make ongoing adjustments in three key areas of school safety: planning, climate, and access.

Safety Plans

First, assess your plans in all areas of safety.

Types of Information

- Identification procedures
- School/classroom access procedures
- Evacuation routes
- Emergency plan
- Safety drill information
- Emergency contact numbers
- Inclement weather plans
- System of school crime tracking, reporting, and feedback
- Discipline/anti-bullying policies
- Locations of emergency equipment
- List of first responders
- Science lab procedures

Next, make the needed modifications or create plans in areas without specific procedures. Finally, be sure appropriate people know pertinent details, such as training options, emergency contacts, and evacuation plans. Information should be shared verbally, in writing through the provision of safety manuals, and visually through posters.

Safe and Caring Climate

Safety should be an integral part of your overall school climate. What is your vision for the climate in your school? It's likely that you want every student and/or faculty member to feel safe and secure, which includes feeling valued and cared for. Critical components in this area include discipline policies, anti-bullying and violence prevention activities, and advocacy strategies.

Discipline

Schools should have a clear discipline code of student behavior and conduct that encourages respect of others (see Chapter E: Effective School and Classroom Discipline). As with all our recommendations, it's important to gather input from all stakeholders so as to ensure ownership. Teachers and other staff members should strive to be impartial, consistently rewarding appropriate behavior and sanctioning unacceptable actions.

Anti-Bullying/Violence Prevention

As a part of school-wide discipline policies regarding respect for others, it is important to reinforce a stance against bullying behaviors, including racial or sexual harassment (see Chapter J: Juggling Social Media and Chapter R: Recognizing the Law). Appropriate actions include addressing student discipline issues in a firm manner that does not shame students, implementing peer mediation programs, and instituting a no-tolerance policy.

Advocacy

One of the best strategies for minimizing problems, or keeping initial discipline problems from growing into larger issues, is to ensure that students have a personal relationship or connection with a caring adult. For example, in middle or high school, organize an advisory program that provides an opportunity for every child to have a personal connection with an adult.

There are many types of advisory or advocacy programs. You want to work with your teachers to determine the organization and function of a program in your school.

School Access

In this area, think of yourself as a gatekeeper. From this perspective, you must determine who has access to your school, as well as the level of access for the variety of people in your school. This includes screening potential employees, developing policies about volunteers and guests (see chart), having a system for those who enter the building both during the day and outside school hours, and having a policy for use of the building for nonschool activities.

Sample Guidelines for Volunteers and Visitors

- Complete any required legal requirements, including background check and/or fingerprinting.
- Attend orientation meeting, if appropriate.
- Follow all procedures for signing into and out of the building; maintain a log of name, time of arrival, time of departure, purpose of visit, and person visiting.
- Wear a name tag when in the school.

Of course, all school-based procedures should be aligned with district policies, and local, state, and federal laws. Additional areas for consideration include identification cards, a safe and secure entranceway, and traffic and parking procedures.

Dealing With a Crisis

Prepare and Prevent

As we've already discussed, the best way to deal with a crisis is to prevent one from occurring. This happens when you plan and prepare for every possibility and put structures in place that prevent or at least minimize a crisis. You can have a comprehensive plan and appropriate structures, and it's still not enough. That's when you need to respond.

Also, be sure to conduct practice drills. Students and staff need to know procedures and be comfortable that they will work when you need to use them.

Respond and Recover

When a crisis happens, first, take a deep breath. Identify the type of crisis and determine the needed response. Implement your plan and communicate appropriately with all parties. It's particularly important that you have a plan for communicating with families and the media (see Chapter K: Keys to Successful Advocacy). Have a system for providing families with accurate, up-to-date information about the event. Once the crisis has passed, it's not over; you need to help everyone recover and return to a normal learning environment as soon as possible. There is no formula for knowing how to balance attending to the emotional needs of students, teachers, and parents while shifting the focus to learning. But even an outward return to instruction is healthy and helps everyone move forward. During the process, identify appropriate follow-up interventions and monitor to see whether or how much additional support is needed. You may need to call in extra help or specialized personnel. In an area private K–12 school, when a ninth-grader was killed in a car accident at the beginning of the year, administrators quickly enlisted the assistance of middle school teachers to help counsel students, as they had stronger relationships with the ninth-graders.

Next, without waiting too long, discuss the lessons learned and make needed adjustments to your plans. As President Dwight Eisenhower pointed out, it is the planning, not the plans, that makes a difference. It may be painful, but taking time to analyze and reflect on the process is an important step to help you plan for the future. Finally, create ways to commemorate the event. Some people may want to simply forget, but others need to find a positive response or way to remember.

Using Social Media When Responding to a Crisis

Facebook and Twitter have become primary sources of quick information. Many families turn first to these sources for current, up-to-date information when a crisis occurs and expect a school to use these tools to communicate information.

Challenges Using Social Media

- **Increased Speed—**Social media often has the first information about a crisis. In fact, students using social media may communicate with their families far more quickly than the school responds. If you don't respond, you can be seen as hiding information. Respond with quick, frequent updates.
- **Inaccuracies—**Because of the speed of social media and the access by so many people, it is hard to monitor the accuracy of information. This can complicate your response and erode confidence in your action. Be prepared to manage false rumors or false facts.
- **Demand for Hyper-Transparency—**People expect to know anything and everything about a crisis. Hesitating to update the public or even the appearance of withholding information can become a problem.

Adapted from: Howard & Metzner (2011); Williamson & Johnston (2012)

The American Public Health Association (2011) provided seven tips for using social media during a crisis.

- Make social media efforts message driven.
- Tap into available resources by having a cadre of volunteers who are comfortable using social media to help with your efforts.
- Keep messages brief and to the point. People are scanning, not reading.
- Make sure you listen as well as respond. Monitor comments and have a plan for responding.
- Have a backup plan. What will you do if computers or the Internet is not working?
- Avoid the appearance of elitism or the belief that those in charge know more than the general public.
- Social media is a new technology and new thinking about how it can be used to communicate. Old strategies or messages probably won't work.

A Final Note

Ultimately, school safety is an area of your job in which you invest tremendous energy and time in covering every contingency, all the time hoping

you never need to use the crisis portion of the plan. You will see the benefits of your planning if and when you face a crisis.

Skills for Principals

- Monitor and evaluate management and operational systems that deal with the welfare and safety of students and employees.
- Understand the requirements for a school safety or crisis management plan.
- Prepare and plan for implementation of school crisis management plans.
- Create and sustain a positive relationship with police and other emergency responders.
- Protect the welfare and safety of students and employees.
- Nurture and sustain a culture of collaboration and trust.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

If It's Predictable, It's Preventable. More Than 2,000 Ways to Improve the Safety and Security in Your School by Ted Hayes and MSP.

Proactive School Security and Emergency Preparedness Planning by Kenneth S. Trump.

This site provides tips for school administrators for reinforcing school safety: www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/schoolsafety_admin.aspx

This is the site for the Educator's School Safety Network: http://eschoolsafety.org

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V

Valuing Your Role as a Learner

Those people who develop the ability to continuously acquire new and better forms of knowledge that they can apply to their work and to their lives will be the movers and shakers in our society for the indefinite future.

—Brian Tracey

Think About It

How are you are lifelong learner?

School leadership is a demanding job, one where you're expected to stay up-to-date on the latest information impacting students and their learning, on the law and its implications for your school, and on curricular and instructional innovations. But, too often, the demands of the job mean that little time is available to devote to your own professional learning.

Gary Marx of the Educational Research Service (2006) suggests that leaders are connected generalists, coming into contact with many people (students, teachers, staff, parents) on many issues (curriculum, instruction, assessment, school activities, school safety, parent involvement). Insightful

leaders recognize that things change and change is difficult. Interestingly, Marx suggests that the more difficult issue may be deciding what to work on, rather than the process of change itself. This requires changing old habits, adjusting perspectives, and valuing the importance of your own learning.

Trends Impacting Schools

- Leadership is shifting from a structure that has the leader as a solitary figure at the top of the organization to an increasingly horizontal leadership design. No single person can possibly know everything, and the need for multiple conceptions of leadership and pathways to leadership is critical.
- Access to information is changing the way students learn and teachers teach. The integration of technology as a tool for teaching and learning will only continue to accelerate.
- Schools are interconnected with all facets of the community and the world. Recognizing the connections with families, community leaders, and economic, political, and social systems is essential.
- The most successful leaders will be those who are able to work with others to create a future. Rather than perpetuating the past, they will enthusiastically embrace future trends and use them to shape the future of their school.
- Educators will continue to struggle with the balance between depth and breadth in the school's program. Leaders must assume the role of looking out for the total system, for balancing the need to deeply understand some things and more narrowly comprehend others. There is a need for both generalists and specialists in any organization.
- Because life is interconnected and schools are connected to their larger community and the world, learning must occur across disciplines. The focus must be on developing skillful, productive, ethical people who are intellectually curious and engaged in multiple interests across an array of topics.

Responding to Change

These shifts reinforce the importance of continuous learning. The six shifts have a common theme—change will continue to occur and at an accelerating pace. As a principal, how will you respond to change that you do not control? Or how can you anticipate change when change is around

every corner? There are eight strategies you can use to learn and be able to respond.

1. Analyze your environment: Scan the environment in which your school exists—district, community, state, nation, and world. Identify issues that affect your organization and those that affect the world more broadly. These trends and issues often emerge as important. What do you need to learn about these trends? Where can you gather that information?
2. Monitor changes in the environment: Read voraciously, talk with a broad selection of people in your community, and stay current with trends at the state and national level.
3. Identify the factors needed for success: Look beyond the traditional educational factors (good teachers, money) and consider emerging issues, such as the maturing of the community, the ability to acquire and use technology, and the ability to respond to changing conditions. Connect with leaders outside of education and learn how they respond to these challenges.
4. Think about your assumptions: After identifying some of the assumptions you hold about your school and its environment, test those by assessing their degree of certainty (high, medium, low) and the level of impact (high, medium, low). Assumptions play an important role in constructing the future, and they should be as reliable as possible.
5. Develop a vision of an alternative future: Consider the issues you think will have an impact on your school and the factors you identified that are critical to success. Develop a vision of the future that is different from current circumstances. The creation of several alternatives is even better. Base your vision and the alternatives on things you've learned, data you've collected, and the ideas of people you consult.
6. Consider the alternatives: Discuss every option to identify the most likely and to begin to think about how to respond to this likely situation. Test the alternatives with other principals, leaders in other fields, and those in your professional network or Personal Learning Network.
7. Develop plans for needed action: Identify steps that can be taken to respond to the anticipated future. "Hedging strategies" can help to cope with undesirable futures. "Shaping strategies" can help create the desired future.
8. Implement plans and monitor progress: Launch initiatives to create the desired future and gather data about progress. Use these data to continue the process by scanning the environment and planning for the future.

Although it is impossible to predict the future, it is possible to anticipate the trends and issues that will impact your school.

How Should I Respond?

Every year we work with dozens of principals, and we've come to appreciate the complexity of their work. Principals are asked to solve some of the most complex and contentious issues in schooling. From these principals, we're learned things you can do to continue your own learning.

Be a Continuous Learner

- Be intellectually curious. Read a lot; think often about current and emerging trends. Be open to ways to improve your school even when things are going well. Spend time with traditional publications and online, in education and in other fields, to learn about trends and new ideas and to promote your own thinking.
- Cultivate a critical friend, someone outside your school or outside education. Such a friend can provide a fresh perspective on issues you face.
- Actively participate in every professional development activity with your teachers. Value the opportunity to learn from them, to reflect on your learning, and to apply it in your work.
- Talk with others about what you read, what you've watched, and what you learn. Sharing your learning models the importance of learning.
- Organize a discussion group with other principals. Identify a shared interest, select a book of interest, and commit to sharing your thinking and ideas.
- Join the online communities of your professional association (NAESP, NASSP, ASCD).
- Create your own book study group around a topic of interest and include principals and leaders in other community organizations.
- Enjoy what you do. Relish the impact that principals have on the education of students in their school. But when the enjoyment fades, find ways to reinvigorate your passion and model the importance of continuous learning.

The good news is that technology has made staying connected far easier than it has ever been. It's now possible to create your own personalized Personal Learning Network that links you to the information, tools, and resources you find most helpful. This brief will describe a PLN and how to create one that meets the unique needs of your job and your school (Richardson & Mancabelli, 2011; Williamson & Johnston, 2012).

Your Own Personal Learning Network

A Personal Learning Network is an online system to help a principal take charge of and manage his or her own learning. It is a relatively new term that grows out of the easy access to online social media tools to build a network of colleagues and friends who can support one another's learning.

Leaders have always networked and sought advice and assistance from colleagues and friends. But those "traditional" networks were often confined to colleagues in one's own organization or personal friends. Those networks provided an opportunity to talk, share ideas, and offer suggestions about one another's work, exactly what the new virtual network will do.

Social media technology allows a leader to expand on these "traditional" networks by creating a virtual network that allows you to gather information and get responses to issues in a real-time environment. By creating your own PLN, you can customize your contacts and the information you access. You can interact with and learn from colleagues all over the country, even all around the world. You can join the interaction or you can choose to just read and consider the ideas. That's one of the benefits of a virtual network, your ability to personalize the resources you access and control the amount of interaction.

Benefits of a PLN

- One-stop access to resources and information
- Ability to search for new tools and innovative practices
- Pose questions and hear from colleagues from all over the world
- Gather thoughtful suggestions on your ideas and projects
- Learn about tools and strategies that strengthen your leadership
- Prompt you to think more deeply about your work

Most importantly, people appreciate the ability to customize the information they receive and to control their level of interaction.

Creating Your Customized PLN

One of the values of a PLN is that it can become your "one-stop" source for information. You can create links to your favorite professional organizations, to blogs written by some of your favorite authors or someone who spoke at a conference, or to sites that deal with a current issue in your school.

The resources are "virtually" unlimited. Here are five steps to creating your own PLN:

Step 1—Determine Your Focus

Spend some time thinking about where you might want to start. What's something you want to know more about? What's a topic of discussion in your school? What's an organization, or a person, you'd like to stay connected to?

You may want to think about those individuals and groups you turn to when you want information about an issue in your school. Perhaps it's a professional organization like ASCD, NASSP, NAESP, or AASA. It might be a site with information about a program in your school. It might even be the blog of an author or speaker who you found informative. Regardless, determine an area of interest to focus your PLN.

Step 2—Create an Account for Your PLN

Probably the easiest way to build a PLN is to create a Twitter (www.twitter.com) account. It's easy to discount Twitter as a tool for sharing minutia. But it can also be a powerful way to connect with professional colleagues. The authors have Twitter accounts and use them for their own professional learning. We separate our professional learning from our personal contacts. You don't need to "tweet," but can instead use Twitter to access current information that helps you in your work.

Another easy way to create a PLN, and maintain a reading list, is Feedly (www.feedly.com). It's a service that allows you to easily search for topics and then click on "+feedly" to add the site to your reading list. Google also offers a set of tools for creating a PLN (http://sites.google.com/site/buildingapln/) that is easy to use and helps get your PLN organized. *Once a Teacher* (http://tinyurl.com/olousp) also provides tools for creating a PLN.

Step 3—Find Your Links

Once you have your account, it's time to find the people or organizations with whom you want to connect. Start by doing a search to identify people or groups that are interested in the same topic. Narrow or expand your search, if needed, to identify links. Bookmark the sites you find of greatest interest or use a tool like Feedly (www.feedly.com) to create a reading list that will send you automatic updates from the sites.

Step 4—Determine Your Level of Participation

Part of joining a network is to both learn and share information. Most people move through a set of predictable stages when they first create their PLN. At first, they remain in the background, reading, listening, and learning. As they become more comfortable with the technology, they become more active participants. They evaluate their contacts and edit their network to assure the right balance between their own learning and their personal and professional lives. That's one of the benefits of a PLN, the ability to tailor and customize both the information you receive and your level of involvement.

Many people share links to articles they've read, to presentations they've seen, to videos they've watched, or to a tool they find helpful. That's an easy way to join the conversation and become comfortable with a virtual network.

Step 5—Manage Your Network

It's important to monitor your involvement. Just like reading a journal, you don't have to read everything that is shared. But you will want to scan the links and see what might contribute to your own learning. A few minutes every day, or every other day, helps you manage your involvement. Ignoring the PLN can lead to feeling totally overwhelmed because of the posts and links you've received. It's the same as letting your favorite journal or set of books pile up while waiting to be read.

A Final Note

It's important that principals stay current and up-to-date on issues impacting their school and their leadership. Whether it is traditional tools like journals, books, and conferences or a virtual tool like a PLN that allows you to access resources and information anytime, anywhere, it's vital to be a learner and to model the importance of learning.

Skills for Principals

- Model a culture of continuous learning.
- Access varied information sources about trends and issues that may impact school and community.
- Be intellectually curious.
- Create a professional learning network.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

Digital Leadership: Changing Paradigms for Changing Times by Eric Sheninger.

The School Leader's Guide to Social Media by Ron Williamson and Howard Johnston.

This article walks you through the process of creating your own PLN: http://tinyurl.com/5qm5b8

This blog entry discusses the importance of lifelong learning: www.budbilanich.com/lifelong-learner/

W

Working Together for the Future

Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.

—Henry Ford

Think About It

Is your school a learning community? What does that term mean to you?

The term "learning community" has become commonplace in the conversation about school reform. You can hear it used to mean almost any sort of collaborative work, including working with community personnel to improve schools or extending classroom practice into the community.

A community of learners describes a school in which teachers and administration continuously seek and share learning and then act on what they learn. The goal is to improve effectiveness, focused on improving the learning of students. A professional learning community is a powerful professional development tool and a potent strategy for school change and reform.

An emphasis on learning reflects the reality that learning never stops and that the most vibrant and successful schools are those where everyone acts on the need to continue to improve. The most successful professional learning involves educators in more collaborative activities to examine their work and improve practice. This chapter will look at how to assure that your school is a place that nurtures the learning of every student and adult.

Professional Learning Communities

Many schools use professional learning communities as a way to engage in professional learning. A professional community of learners is a school where teachers and administration continuously seek to learn and grow professionally and then act on what they learn (Astuto, Clark, Read, McGree, & Fernandez, 1993; DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010). The goal is to improve student learning by improving effectiveness.

Three things define successful learning communities. They ensure that students learn, they create a culture of collaboration, and they focus on results, no matter what it takes. Members are accountable to one another and are comfortable working on activities where their work is more transparent. Everyone shares a commitment to continuous improvement.

Characteristics of a Professional Learning Community

- **Collective Inquiry**: Teachers and leaders work collaboratively to examine data about student learning and develop a plan to address students' needs.
- **Supportive and Shared Leadership**: Power and authority is shared by inviting teachers and families to provide input into decision making about improving student learning.
- **Action Orientation**: There is a willingness to try new things and adopt a "whatever it takes" stance in support of student learning.
- **Focus on Continuous Improvement**: Teachers and leaders recognize the value of routinely examining practice and making changes when appropriate.
- **Results Orientation**: There is clarity about outcomes with a "laser light" focus on achieving the desired results.

Adapted from: Eaker, DuFour, & DuFour, 2002; Hord & Sommers, 2008

Benefits of Professional Learning Communities

Early research on things that impact teacher work found that teachers who felt supported in their own ongoing learning and instructional improvement were more committed and effective than those who did not receive such support (Rosenholtz, 1989). Support, such as expanded professional roles, cooperation among colleagues, and participation in teacher networks, led to a high sense of efficacy. Teachers with a high sense of efficacy were more likely to adopt new classroom behaviors and more likely to remain in the profession.

Benefits for Staff

- Reduced isolation of teachers
- Increased commitment to mission and goals of the school
- Collective responsibility for students' success
- More likely to be professionally renewed
- Higher satisfaction, higher morale, lower rates of absenteeism
- Commitment to making significant and lasting changes
- Greater likelihood of undertaking systemic change
- Learning that defines good teaching and classroom practice
- Creates new knowledge and beliefs about teaching and learners

Adapted from: Hord & Sommers, 2008; DuFour & Marzano, 2011

McLaughlin, Talbert, and Bascia (1993) confirmed these findings and suggested that teachers who had opportunities for collaborative inquiry and the learning related to it were able to develop and share their learning. The ultimate benefit of a professional learning community is a positive impact on learning for everyone—including students.

Benefits for Students

- Lower absenteeism
- Greater academic gains than in traditional schools
- Smaller achievement gaps between students from different backgrounds
- Decreased dropout rate
- Increased learning distributed more equitably in smaller high schools

Source: Hord (1997)

Who Thrives in a Professional Learning Community?

Although there is clear research as to the benefits of professional learning communities, some teachers and administrators resist the idea. Those who function best in this environment tend to be intellectually curious; analytical, critical thinkers; creative, reflective readers and listeners; stimulated by new ideas; and adept at "reconstructing" knowledge. That does not mean teachers or administrators who do not have those characteristics cannot be effective in a professional learning community; however, they may need more time and support to thrive (see Chapter N: New Ideas, New Challenges).

Role of the Principal in a Professional Learning Community

The school change literature clearly recognizes the role and influence of the principal on whether change will occur in a school (see Chapter Y: Year After Year: Sustaining Success). Transforming a school into a professional learning community can be done only with the sanction and support of the leader. Therefore, the decision to move to a professional learning community ultimately lies with you.

In order to build a successful learning community, you must abandon the traditional position of authority and participate in your own professional development. Your role is that of a learner, along with teachers and other staff, "questioning, investigating, and seeking solutions for school improvement" (Hord, 1997). In order to set aside the traditional hierarchy and recognize there is a need for everyone to contribute, you must be skillful at

facilitating the work of staff. As you respect the process of inquiry to promote understanding and construct mutually agreed upon solutions, you will need to participate without dominating.

What a Principal Can Do

Many schools have created professional learning communities, but struggle to sustain them. There are five strategies that schools use to nurture and sustain their professional learning communities (Hord & Sommers, 2008; DuFour & Marzano, 2011).

1. Organize your school to provide time for teachers to work together and reduce isolation. Common planning time, teaching or departmental teams, and location of classrooms are a few examples. Identify a room that is set aside for these collaborative activities, where teams can meet and discuss their learning and how to positively impact student learning. A list of suggested ways to find time for professional learning is in Chapter P.
2. Promote greater autonomy, foster collaboration, and improve communication. In one school, every department-level policy had to be shared with the other departments so that consideration could be given to its impact. This proved helpful to the design of more broadly accepted policies.
3. Provide time for professional learning both during the school day and at other scheduled times. Many schools convert their staff meetings into opportunities for professional dialogue and collaborative work.
4. Hire teachers who are comfortable in a collaborative environment, accepting feedback, and critiquing their practice and who share your commitment to improved student learning.
5. Be transparent about your own learning and encourage those around you to do the same. Be inquisitive. Read widely. Work to create an atmosphere of trust and respect among all school personnel. Talk about the things you've learned and how you continue to improve your practice.

A Final Note

Professional learning communities can transform the culture of your school. They provide benefits to teachers, students, and the entire community. Building a professional learning community takes time and a change in leadership style, but the results are worth it.

Skills for Principals

- Find the time and resources to build a professional culture of openness and collaboration, engaging teachers in sharing information, analyzing outcomes, and planning improvement.
- Model openness to change and collaboration to improve practices and student outcomes.
- Collaborate with staff, families, caregivers, and the community to develop a shared vision, mission, and goals for the school.
- Use and analyze varied sources of information about current school practices to shape the vision, mission, and goals of the school.
- Engage stakeholders, including those with conflicting points of view, in shaping the vision, mission, and goals of the school.
- Develop shared commitments and responsibilities that are distributed among staff and community for achieving the vision, mission, and goals of the school.
- Guide and support job-embedded, standards-based professional development focused on improving teaching and learning.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

Kid by Kid, Skill by Skill: Teaching in a Professional Learning Community (PLC) at Work by Robert Eaker and Janet Kearing.

Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work by Richard and Rebecca DuFour.

This blog entry describes six attributes of Professional Learning Communities: http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning_forwards_pd_watch/2015/05/what_is_an_authentic_professional_learning_community.html

This resource page from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction provides a variety of materials, including protocols for discussion: www.ncpublicschools.org/profdev/resources/proflearn/

X

X Factor: Balancing Work and Personal Life

If you can know the point of balance, you can settle the details. If you can settle the details, you can stop running around. Your mind will become calm. If your mind becomes calm, you can think in front of a tiger. If you can think in front of a tiger, you will surely succeed.

—Mencius, Chinese Philosopher

Think About It

If you were completely effective, efficient, and balanced, what would your life be like?

Finding the balance between personal and professional responsibilities is a struggle for many people, but especially for school leaders. Principals find balance to be a struggle because of the complexity of their job, the extended school day, and the expectations from both senior leadership in their district and from families and community (Whitaker, 1996). The idea that school leaders are available any time, any day of the week adds additional stress (Presser, 2005). While the importance of work–life balance is well documented, there is no single strategy or approach that works for everyone.

Balance, in the truest sense of the word, is not about compartmentalizing your life. As David Allen in *Getting Things Done* (2015) notes, it's about being appropriately engaged with what you are doing in the moment. Principals have developed a number of strategies to help organize the tasks and devote their time and energy to their most important priorities.

The Importance of Balance

Work–life balance doesn't necessarily mean there is an equal division between the two. Individual interests, goals, obligations, and commitments mean that the balance is more fluid and shifts over time. But the evidence is clear that work–life balance positively impacts individuals as well as the organizations where they work. Here's a summary of the benefits:

Benefits

Benefits for the Individual	Benefits for the Organization
■ Work–life balance contributes to a healthier life. ■ Stress is reduced when there is balance. ■ Relationships improve both on the job and away from the job. ■ Your work, as well as your personal life, is more satisfying.	■ There is increased productivity and commitment at work. ■ Teamwork and communication is improved. ■ Overall organizational stress is reduced. ■ The collective morale improves.

Let's look at four big strategies that can help you develop balance in your life:

Four Strategies to Achieve Balance

1. Assess where you are and where you want to be.
2. Set realistic goals and expectations.
3. Create structures to manage your work–life balance.
4. Communicate, communicate, communicate.

Assess Where You Are and Where You Want to Be

The first step is to recognize the strengths and challenges of your current situation. One principal we interviewed was so overwhelmed, she said, "I don't think I can make a list. It will make it seem worse!" That's not true. You may think you don't have time for this step, or you may not want to think about all the challenges, but it is critical in order to make progress.

In order to achieve work–life balance, you need to think about yourself, your patterns, and your aspirations. Values and beliefs shape our actions and impact our personal set of life experiences. Here are some suggestions for assessing where you are and where you want to be.

Define what "greater balance" means for you and think about what you value. Being clear about your values is one key to establishing balance, or at least understanding why you don't have balance. A conflict in values can create stress and disrupt the balance we seek. For example, you may value getting to work early, but also value spending a little time with your spouse, children, or significant other before your day begins. Perhaps you value finishing your work before you leave for the day, but also value attending your children's after-school activities or being available to help with childcare or household chores (Graham, 2002).

Part of this process is to create a vision of where you want to be. Take a few moments to imagine a day in which you are relaxed and productive. You might go back to your response to the "Think About It" question at the beginning of the chapter. Now, create a statement that describes your vision and write it on an index card.

Sample Vision Card

> Within three years, this school will be the highest performing school in the district, with no differences among subgroups of students. In order to achieve that goal, I will balance my personal life and my work life so I can be the most effective leader I can be.

Next, identify your patterns and understand your natural workday rhythms. Think about how you organize your day. What things always get accomplished and what things are deferred? What choices do you make

about sleep, diet, and exercise? Do you schedule breakfast meetings or do you reserve that time for transitioning from personal to work? (Graham, 2002) People have their own natural rhythms. Identify your rhythms and patterns during the day. Some people prefer an unstructured start to the day; others prefer to jump right into their work. Figure out your rhythms and structure your work around those natural patterns. Pay attention to your patterns over the day, assuring adequate breaks and time to rejuvenate (Chakravarty, 2011; Uscher, 2011). Finally, plan your day based on your patterns and rhythms.

Set Realistic Goals and Expectations

Finding work–life balance is about setting priorities and managing time (Graham, 2002; Uscher, 2011). Our perceptions, attitudes, and assumptions often shape the expectations we have for ourselves. Here are some suggestions for setting realistic goals:

Tips for Setting Realistic Goals

- ***Check out assumptions about your work***. Talk with your supervisor about priorities and balance. Help your supervisor understand the right balance for your life and how that balance can be achieved. Often we set our unrealistic standards for our own performance. Good supervisors know the importance of work–life balance and how a lack of balance can negatively impact an individual's work and the entire organization (Chakravarty, 2011; Hall & Richter, 1989).
- ***Talk with your family or significant other*** about priorities and schedules. Much of the stress about work–life balance is a result of tension with those we care about the most. Talking about the issues and being open to finding solutions helps lessen the stress (Graham, 2002).
- ***Include time for yourself*** and your own personal interests as one of your goals. Be sure to allow time for adequate sleep and exercise. Make healthy choices about what and when you eat (Anderson, 2013; Chakravarty, 2011).

Create Structure to Manage Your Work–Life Balance

Finally, create a set of regular, consistent structures that ensure you will attain your vision. There is not a perfect strategy—except the one that works for you. However, there are strategies that have been effectively used by other principals.

Sample Strategies

"Repeating Task File": Many of the responsibilities and tasks occur annually. Education is cyclical. A repeating task file is a way of creating a reminder about the tasks to be anticipated, planned for, and accomplished. For example, a high school principal will need to confirm graduation plans annually, and an elementary principal will need to conduct kindergarten roundup annually. Some people use a set of file folders labeled by month and include items in the folder that remind them of the tasks to be accomplished that month. One principal created an electronic file to accomplish the same task. Some people use a daily ticker file instead of a monthly file.

Develop a filing system: Use colored file folders to distinguish tasks. One principal used a red folder to identify things requiring her signature, a green folder to hold new correspondence, yellow for pending activities, and red for completed work and papers in need of filing. Such a system can work with a secretary or administrative assistant to organize tasks.

Use a journal: A number of administrators maintain a running journal to take notes in meetings and create a "to do" list. This ensures that everything is in one place rather than on multiple pieces of paper or multiple sticky notes. It makes it easy to look back and find ideas and tasks that emerged in earlier meetings. May be either digital or paper.

Maintain a single calendar: Nothing can be more confusing and lead to missed commitments than maintaining multiple calendars.

Include your personal life in your planning: Specifically schedule family time, personal time, and time for exercise in your life.

Handle it only once: To the extent possible, handle any correspondence or e-mail only once. Unless it requires additional thought or planning, respond, delegate, or file.

Plan weekly or monthly: Many principals find it helpful to look at the "big picture" and plan either weekly or monthly. Taking this big look at tasks allows the leader to make decisions about the allocation of time.

Delegate: Be comfortable delegating tasks to people who have the knowledge and skill to complete them.

Organize your digital life: Arrange computer files and documents, so that information can be easily retrieved. Use a flash drive or external hard drive to back up work routinely.

(*Continued*)

(*Continued*)

Use e-mail efficiently: Delete if not needed, save if appropriate and documentation is required, forward to someone else, or complete the task.

Use all available e-mail tools: Check e-mail at set times, not all the time. If you can, respond when you first read the message. Handle them all as a group—start with the first and move through them until complete. Use descriptive subject lines to identify the substance of the message. Set up a signature line including name and contact information. Keep messages short to ensure that the response is focused.

Keep your focus: Turn off the automatic notification on your e-mail program. When it beeps, it only distracts you from your work.

Break large projects into small parts: Define the goal and create a series of tasks. Often smaller tasks are easier to accomplish, and this helps to move the project along.

Establish norms around access: Everyone wants an "open door," but a literal open door can lead to fragmentation. Identify a quiet time each day to respond to e-mail. Don't reinforce the idea that you respond the minute you receive a message. Establish norms around interruptions. Work with school clerical staff to protect time.

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

While planning is helpful to work–life balance, even more helpful is communication with your supervisor and with your spouse or significant other. In the absence of communication, others are left to form their own opinions and make their own judgments. Here are some other communication tips from the University of Maine (Graham, 2002).

Tips for Communication

- Hold family meetings to talk about schedules and priorities.
- Keep both weekly and monthly schedules that include time for your priorities, including exercise, family activities, and personal interests.
- Be willing to revise your plans when there are conflicts or change is needed.
- Understand what you can control and what you can't.
- Keep a sense of humor.
- Remember that effective work–life balance is not a static event, developed one time, but a process that evolves and changes over time.

A Final Note

Finding work–life balance is a personal journey. It's important to understand yourself, your own values and goals, your own need for boundaries and balance, and your tolerance for the negative consequences of failing to seek balance.

Skills for Principals

- Value a high-quality curricular and instructional program above all else.
- Recognize the importance of balancing managerial and instructional tasks.
- Develop a method for establishing priorities.
- Implement systems to deal with routine managerial tasks.
- Understand that the work is never done.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

Get Organized! Time Management for School Leaders (2nd ed.) by Frank Buck.

Stress Less: 10 Balancing Insights on Work and Life by Amy Freeman.

This article from the Mayo Clinic offers tips for work–life balance: www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/work-life-balance/art-20048134

This *Business Today* article offers tips that can be immediately used to improve work–life balance: https://tinyurl.com/ncxw5s8

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Y

Year After Year: Sustaining Success

People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing—that's why we recommend it daily.

—Zig Ziglar

Think About It

How many new initiatives are implemented in your school each year? Which ones have lasted over time?

School communities are under increasing pressure to dramatically improve the educational experience of students. Principals face the need to lead their staff and community in examining current practice, implementing changes, and sustaining them from year to year.

Ron recently visited with a Tucson high school principal to discuss the challenges she faced at her school. When she became principal, she found that many improvement projects were under way, but almost all were the responsibility of an individual department or program. There was no unifying

theme and no uniform purpose. She described it as "lots of good people trying to do things that made a difference," but there was little coordination among the projects. Across the campus, there was a lot of distrust, cynicism, and no interest in talking about the issues.

At her first staff meeting, the principal invited staff to write down their concerns, fears, and frustrations on index cards. The cards were collected and the principal placed them in a large paper bag. She shared her vision for making this school high performing and invited the staff to join her on a journey to transform their school.

"I also told them that they could return to their rooms and go about preparing for the start of the school year or they could join me in the courtyard at noon for a ceremonial burning of the cards." Less than one-third of the staff met in the courtyard to observe the cards representing their frustrations, concerns, and fears going up in smoke.

Those who attended became members of a newly constituted School Improvement Committee. The committee developed specific plans to improve literacy and mathematics instruction at the school and to create a safe learning environment for all students. The principal worked with those who did not attend to encourage their participation, but also supported and assisted their efforts to transfer if so desired.

Three years later, the high school is one of the highest performing in the district. Student achievement is vastly improved. Far fewer students drop out each year. It has one of the highest percentages of students taking advanced placement classes among district high schools.

Mary Clark, principal of Conway Middle School, begins her school year in a similar manner. She gives her teachers an "Invitation to a Fresh Start." Teachers write down anything that is holding them back from a fresh start to the new year, and then they hold a celebratory event, throwing all of the slips in a trash can. As she says to them, "Remember to treat yourself well, then release yourself from the past!"

Fresh Start

Today, you are cordially invited to a Fresh Start!

Take the time to jot down thoughts, feelings, or ideas that in the past have kept you (or are currently keeping you) from enjoying your work and/or performing to the best of your ability.

Treat yourself—release yourself!

Dynamics of the Change Process

In order to make changes that are long lasting, we must first consider the change process. Originally developed by the North Central Regional Education Lab, the Wisconsin Department of Public Education (n.d.) identifies six characteristics of successful schools:

1. A clear, strong, and collectively held educational vision and institutional mission
2. A strong, committed professional community with distributed leadership
3. A focus on learning environments that promote high standards for student achievement
4. Sustained professional development to improve learning
5. Successful partnerships with parents and community organizations and agencies building a broad base of support
6. A systematic plan for gathering evidence of success

We discuss each of these characteristics elsewhere in this book. In Chapter B, we address vision. Chapter S includes information on building a strong professional community, which is supported with sustained professional development (Chapter P) and partnerships with parents and the community (Chapter T). Finally, Chapters N and W include information about working with others to plan to implement change.

Sustaining Change

However, it is important to consider them in the context of sustaining growth. Most school improvement projects last more than one year and require a long-term commitment to success.

Central to all sustained improvement efforts is the presence of a clear, mutually agreed to and collectively supported vision statement. It serves as the litmus test for all improvement efforts. For example, does this activity align with our vision and support our agreed upon mission?

Because school improvement is a long-term process, it is important to provide continued professional development for those expected to implement the changes. There is a lot of evidence that the most important professional development comes after an initiative has begun. Often, it is only then that teachers and others fully understand the implications of the project. They have appropriate questions about implementation and support.

Finally, rarely do school improvement projects achieve everything they set out to achieve. Not only is it important to involve teachers and other school constituents in planning, but also it is important to involve them in monitoring implementation and helping to make any adjustments that might be needed. For example, the pace of implementation might require modification or additional professional development might be useful.

What Works and Doesn't Work With Innovation

One of the most powerful tools for sustaining change is the culture of your school. Schools characterized by a positive working relationship among teachers and active support by the principal for the change are more likely to see the project succeed. A laissez-faire attitude by the principal will virtually assure poor implementation and that the change will not succeed. Schools where the principal is active, visible, and supportive of the change experience greater success. Principal participation bestows a stamp of legitimacy on any project and helps to sustain it after implementation.

Michael Fullan (2007) says that sustainable change boils down to three critical focal points. First is improving relationships among staff. Second is working together to create knowledge and sharing that knowledge with one another, and the third is "coherence-making," or helping people make sense and give importance to their work.

Fullan's Focal Points

Developing/ Strengthening Social Relationships	■ Encourage development of social norms that support innovation and achievement for all students ■ Establish teams and learning communities
Learning	■ Create opportunities for people to learn in their own work setting ■ Recognize that the best learning comes from peers ■ Find time during the normal school day for teachers to learn from one another
Cultivate Leaders at Many Levels	■ Build a cadre of leaders, formal and informal ■ Provide teachers with opportunity to lead professional development and school improvement projects

Adapted from: Fullan (2007)

Stages for Launching an Initiative

Next, in order to build a strong foundation for change, allow time to work through a series of stages. The Oregon Small Schools Initiative (2010) identified six stages for the launch of any initiative:

1. **Study**: Time devoted to examining and learning about an issue and associated reforms. School, district, and community members can examine current practices and programs, identify gaps in student learning, and discuss how the reform can improve the educational experience of students.
2. **Stage**: During this component, a school reviews its current programs, practices, and policies and creates a shared vision for the future. Including a diverse group of people in this process helps to support, nurture, and sustain the change.
3. **Design**: This step involves the creation of standards or design frameworks that will be used to develop the specific program.
4. **Build**: During this part of the change process, the specific program components are developed and linked to the school's improvement plan.
5. **Launch**: Implementation of the plan involves mobilizing human and financial resources. It includes the provision of professional development to support the change.
6. **Sustain**: Monitoring implementation and building capacity to sustain the initiative after its launch characterizes this stage. Also included is gathering and analyzing data about the impact of the change.

At one middle school Ron worked with in suburban Chicago, there was interest in redesigning the program to provide more time for some subjects and to ensure that the program provided students with the knowledge and skills for success as they moved to high school and beyond.

A person knowledgeable in middle school programs was asked to visit the district; review the current program; talk with students, teachers, and parents; and then make recommendations to the district.

As a result of this review, the district decided to launch a school improvement project that involved teachers and parents in reviewing the program and making recommendations to strengthen offerings.

The first step was to involve teachers and parents in the development of a school mission statement. They used the process outlined in Chapter B: Begin With a Vision. Several committees were convened to study specific issues such as curricular offerings, exploratory classes, enrichment opportunities, teaming arrangements, and ensuring positive relationships. Each group read about the topic, reviewed research, and talked about the school's

students. Each group developed recommendations that, when implemented, would change the school's program.

To monitor implementation, a Steering Committee of teachers and parents was organized. This committee was asked to review all recommendations and ensure that they were aligned with the school's mission. They also created an implementation timeline and determined which recommendations would be the first to be implemented. They were also responsible for monitoring the implementation to ensure its long-term success.

Tapping Into Motivation for Support

Finally, as we point out in Chapter N: New Ideas, New Challenges and as we described in Chapter M: Motivating Teachers, in order to build a broad base of support for a change, you must consider the motivational factors of your stakeholders.

Two Motivational Questions

1. What is the value of the change?
2. Can I be successful with the change?

Value

There are two specific steps you can take to help all stakeholders see the value of the innovation. First, in order to help each person see the value of the proposed change, *be sure to provide a clear, compelling rationale.* Unless provided with a compelling rationale for changing programs and practices, school communities resist change. As a part of the conversation, use data that are clear, meaningful, and linked to student success (see Chapter D). Next, *provide ample opportunities for staff, students, and parents to be appropriately involved* in planning reform initiatives. Such participation should include known supporters, as well as known dissenters, in order to build a cadre of people who understand the issue and can advocate for recommended changes.

At one school in central Ohio, the principal organized a work group of teachers and family members to work on assessing their program. The school had a history of underachievement among several subgroups of students. Their first task was to discuss and agree on the measures that they would use to measure the success of their program. The list of indicators

they developed included the normal things—test results, attendance, and demographic information, among others.

The group was then asked to review the information and identify patterns or trends that they observed. This review led to a recognition that many students were not doing well in school.

Rather than simply announce the agenda, the principal built value and support for examining current practices by taking the time to involve teachers and families in identifying the problem.

Success

There are also two key building blocks that will help stakeholders succeed. First, *identify specific indicators of success.* During the initial planning stage, prior to launching any initiative, be sure to identify how you will measure success. Be as specific as possible to give all stakeholders a vision of how they will be successful. Then, after initiating the change, routinely collect data about both implementation and the impact of student learning. Use the data to guide decisions about sustaining the initiative.

Second, *provide support for implementation.* Once a reform is launched, it is important to support implementation with professional development linked directly to the initiative. It is also critical to provide time for those involved to routinely meet, debrief, and make appropriate adjustments.

Four Ways to Ensure Long-Lasting Change

Value	Success
■ Provide a clear, compelling rationale. ■ Provide appropriate opportunities for stakeholders during the planning process.	■ Provide support for implementation. ■ Identify specific indicators of success.

Middle schools in one district in western New York were underachieving. To address the issue, a planning committee was organized consisting of teachers, administrators, and parents from each school. Their first task was to develop an agreed upon statement of vision and mission for the middle school program. Before developing the statement, they gathered and reviewed data about local demographic trends, social and economic factors affecting schools, current data about the schools, and information about effective practices.

This review led to a shared commitment for change—to create a middle school program that would prepare students for success as they moved to high school and beyond. This shared commitment provided the clear rationale to support changes to the educational program.

The planning committee then made recommendations to continue some school programs, to modify others, and to implement some new approaches. The committee was involved in developing a plan for implementing each recommendation and measuring its success.

Sustaining Success

Innovations are sustained when it becomes everyone's job to make sure they continue. That means that resources, time, and leadership must be provided so that people become committed to the changes. In Chapter L, we share four strategies for sustaining school programs when funding is withdrawn or cut all together: Reduce, Refine, Restructure, and Regenerate. Here's a brief summary.

Four Strategies for Sustaining School Programs with Limited Funding

Reduce	Reduce spending in one area and allocate funds to the innovative project.
Refine	Streamline basic school operations and processes through innovation and the use of technology.
Restructure	Change the way your school does business to reduce consumption and still improve student achievement.
Regenerate	Locate new resources and create sustainable operations to assure long-term viability for your innovation.

A Final Note

Although we have provided a series of steps and building blocks designed for long-lasting change, please note the underlying thread of broad-based ownership throughout the information. The most effective way to ensure success over the years is to develop a broad foundation of support. The enemy of sustained changed is a "Lone Ranger" mentality. If you are the owner of the initiatives, they die as soon as your attention is directed elsewhere. Throughout the change process, build shared ownership (see Chapter C), and you'll see long-lasting results.

Skills for Principals

- Establish, conduct, and evaluate the way to engage staff and community in implementing and sustaining the school's vision, mission, and goals.
- Develop shared commitment from staff and community to nurture and sustain the school's vision, mission, and goals.
- Engage diverse stakeholders, including those with varied points of view, in the implementation of the school's vision, mission, and goals.
- Advocate with staff and community for the resources (time, people, money) to nurture and sustain the school's vision, mission, and goals.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

The Principal: Three Keys to Maximizing Impact by Michael Fullan.

The Principal's Companion: Strategies to Lead School for Student and Teacher Success by Pamela Robbins and Harvey Alvy (editors).

This paper, by Michael Fullan, discusses how principals are leaders in a culture of change: www.michaelfullan.ca/media/13396053050.pdf

This article shares how principals work together to bring about change: www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin330.shtml

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Z

Zero In on Your Schedule

A revised schedule is to business what a new season is to an athlete or a new canvas to an artist.

—Norman Ralph Augustine

Think About It

How would you rate the effectiveness of your current schedule? Are there adjustments you would like to make?

Creating and managing the school schedule can be one of the most time-consuming tasks facing a principal. It's easy to focus just on the logistics of the schedule, but an effective schedule or organizational pattern is just a tool to accomplish other things. There are four basic principles for building an effective schedule.

Basic Principles

- Schedules reflect a school's values and priorities.
- Most effective schedules are anchored in a shared vision.

(*Continued*)

(*Continued*)

- A quality schedule emerges when teachers and administrators work together in its design.
- Without clear goals, the schedule is merely a plan for organizing teachers and students; when guided by goals, the schedule becomes a powerful tool to positively affect teaching and learning.

Your school schedule is a powerful tool to support your instructional program. Through the process of developing or adjusting the schedule, you can facilitate or promote collaborative work, help with interdisciplinary links, and create varied instructional design. Remember, you can schedule anything; you just can't schedule everything in the same schedule. It's all about priorities.

Before you begin to design a school schedule, you will want to check and see whether your district or state has any requirements that might shape the schedule. For example, some states require a certain number of minutes of instruction in some content areas. Other things that may affect the schedule are facility constraints and workload limits included in employee contracts.

Starting the Conversation

The first step is to have a conversation about the schedule with key stakeholders. In this step, it's important to begin with clearly identified goals. Clarity of goals builds support for a new schedule and narrows the alternatives to be considered.

Next, organize the conversation around a series of questions. For example, what data do we have that we should consider changing the schedule? Given a new schedule, how do we want to allocate time based on needs of students? Do some subjects need additional time for instruction?

Throughout the conversation, value collaboration. Participation in planning builds support and serves as a form of professional development and it builds capacity for a successful implementation. Finally, provide a balanced review; investigate all options and have a thorough discussion of advantages and disadvantages of all models that are considered.

One almost universal priority is to find time for professional learning. Without time to meet and engage in professional development, it is a challenge to sustain school improvement. Time to collaborate and learn and work together is essential. Chapter P: Professional Learning Facilitates Growth discusses how to create time for professional learning.

Scheduling Options

The approach to scheduling varies among elementary, middle, and high school. Approaches that fit one school may not work in another. What is most important is to consider your school's program and its students. Select the approach that helps to improve the educational experience of your students. While there is an almost infinite number of schedules, here are some of the most common approaches:

Elementary School Schedules

Most elementary schools are organized into self-contained classrooms. In some schools, the upper elementary grades may be organized around departmental subjects. An issue that faces all elementary school principals is how to schedule special classes such as art, music, and physical education. The preference of many elementary teachers is to have uninterrupted time for reading and mathematics instruction in the morning. This creates a conflict because all special classes cannot be scheduled in the afternoon.

Factors to Consider When Scheduling Special Classes

- Priority for uninterrupted instructional blocks
- Providing planning time by scheduling across the week
- Need to provide common grade-level planning time
- Special teachers who may be shared with other schools

Another way that some elementary schools organize classes is to place all lower elementary classes in one wing of the school and all upper elementary classes in another. This allows each wing to focus on the developmental needs of those students. It also permits greater collaboration among teachers at each grade level.

Yet another strategy used in some schools is to place a class or two from each grade in each wing. This facilitates teacher interaction among the grades and eases grouping and regrouping of students in some subjects.

Another approach to organizing elementary schools to provide greater content-specific instruction is the parallel block schedule. This schedule allows teachers to teach a single content area and to develop instructional skills for a specific content area. Teams of teachers share students among the content areas. A parallel block schedule also allows students to be grouped

based on instructional ability and facilitates grouping and regrouping so that students are not necessarily tracked in all content areas.

In the following example, having four teachers at a grade level permits two teachers to teach reading, language arts, and social studies and two to teach math and science. Students in each grade go to "special" classes at the same time, providing teachers with common planning time.

Sample Schedule

	1	2	3	4	5
Tch A Rdg/LA/SS	Rdg/LA	Rdg/LA	SPECIALS	Rdg/LA	Rdg/LA
Tch B Rdg/LA/SS	Rdg/LA	Rdg/LA		Rdg/LA	Rdg/LA
Tch C Math/Sci	Math/Sci	Math/Sci		Math/Sci	Math/Sci
Tch D Math/Sci	Math/Sci	Math/Sci		Math/Sci	Math/Sci

As with all scheduling models, adaptations are needed to fit the specific needs of your school.

Middle and High School Schedules

Middle and high schools offer additional scheduling challenges because of the number of specialized courses offered and the complexity of the curriculum. There is not a one-size-fits-all approach; rather, you will need to find the approach that best matches the needs of your school.

Six Scheduling Approaches

- Traditional fixed period
- Block schedules
- Alternating schedules
- Rotating schedules
- Dropped schedules
- Trimester Schedules

Source: Williamson (2009).

Fixed Period Schedule

One of the most common schedules is a traditional fixed period schedule. In this model, classes are generally of equal length and meet every day for a semester or year.

Block Schedules

Block schedules provide longer instructional blocks, which can provide instructional flexibility. Teachers often have greater choice in instructional strategies, releasing energy and creativity often restricted in a traditional schedule. Blocks also have a positive impact on school climate. There are often fewer class changes and fewer classes each day, reducing stress for both teachers and students.

Here is an example of a four-by-four block schedule, with four classes each semester.

Sample Block Schedule

	Semester 1	Semester 2
1	English	Algebra 1
2	Spanish 1	Concert Band
3	Phys Ed	Economics
4	Earth Science	Speech

In some schools, the four-by-four block schedule looks different. Each day has four classes, and they alternate from day to day. This example shows one week. The next week, Classes 5–8 would meet on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, while Classes 1–4 meet on Tuesday and Thursday.

Alternating Block Schedule

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri
8:00–9:30	1	5	1	5	1
9:35–11:05	2	6	2	6	2
11:05–11:35	**Lunch**				
11:35–1:05	3	7	3	7	3
1:10–2:40	4	8	4	8	4

Alternating Day Schedules

In an alternating schedule, each class does not meet every day. You may alternate days or alternate semesters. In this scenario, having fewer classes each day provides longer instructional blocks, with the same benefits mentioned earlier. Alternating models vary the class meetings on any given day. Most often, an alternating schedule simply alternates the classes from day to day all year.

Rotating Schedule

In a rotating schedule, classes actually rotate from day to day throughout the week. A Maryland middle school uses this schedule, and teachers rave about the benefits of working with students at different times during the day. They value the different perspectives that it provides about students and their learning. Of course, a rotating schedule is complicated if you have a lot of teachers shared with other schools.

Sample Rotating Schedule

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
1	2	3	4	5
2	3	4	5	6
3	4	5	6	1
4	5	6	1	2
5	6	1	2	3
6	1	2	3	4

Dropped Schedules

In a dropped schedule, a class is dropped and another activity occupies the time. In the following sample, a Michigan high school replaces two classes a week with a seminar period. During the seminar, teachers work with students on a variety of study skills; it provides an opportunity for advising students on school issues. The "dropped" classes vary from week to week assuring that no single class is always impacted.

Dropped Schedule

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
1	1	1	1	1
2	**Seminar**	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	**Seminar**	5
6	6	6	6	6

Trimester Schedules

Finally, the trimester schedule is a model often used by high schools and some middle schools to provide students with more course offerings. The school year is divided into three equal parts, with courses scheduled accordingly.

Trimester Schedule

	Fall	Winter	Spring
1	Algebra 1	Algebra 1	English 1B
2	English 1A	Biology	Biology
3	Phys Ed.	Spanish 1B	World History 1A
4	Spanish 1A	US History	Phys Ed
5	Band	Band	Band

Infinite Options

Of course, these are not the only options. There is an infinite variety and even combinations of these alternatives. We've seen rotating block schedules and an alternating day dropped schedule. What's important is that the model you use aligns with your school's vision and helps you ensure a quality learning experience for every student.

Rubric for Effective Schedules

Again, the question is not which schedule is best. The question is which schedule is best *for your situation*. An effective schedule is a tool that allows you and your faculty to accomplish your goals. Redesigning your school's schedule usually involves teachers and other school personnel. The primary goal is to improve instruction and provide teachers with greater control over and flexibility in the instructional program.

We've found that it is important to consider both process issues and instructional issues when thinking about the schedule. Few schedules are described as "perfect." This rubric can be used to both assess your current schedule and provide a design for continued growth.

The rubric on the following pages will assist you as you assess your progress toward effective scheduling.

Rubric for Scheduling Process Issues

	High	Medium	Low
Participation	Teachers are actively involved in selecting the design of the schedule.	Limited involvement of some teachers in design of the schedule.	Teachers are not involved in selecting the design of the schedule.
Decision Making	The adoption of a new schedule design is made using an agreed upon decision-making process.	The decision-making process involves some teachers and other school personnel.	Adoption of a new schedule is problematic because it was decided by the administration.
Use of Data	Multiple sources of data, including data about student learning, are used to guide selection of a new schedule design.	Limited data are used to establish the design of the schedule.	Little or no data is gathered and used to guide decisions about the design of the school schedule.

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	High	Medium	Low
Professional Development	A multiyear professional development program focused on instructional design supports adoption of a new schedule.	Some professional development is provided.	No professional development is provided to support adoption of a new schedule.

Rubric for Scheduling Instructional Issues

	High	Medium	Low
Long Instructional Blocks	The school day provides long instructional blocks that can be used to meet the instructional needs of students.	The schedule includes some instructional blocks in some subjects.	Instructional time is divided into fixed period classes that minimize options for flexible instructional practices.
Presence of Common Planning Time	The schedule provides common time during the school day for teachers who work together to meet and plan instruction.	Some teachers have common planning time with other teachers at their grade or in their content area.	The schedule provides little or no common planning time for teachers who share students or teach a common grade or content area.
Grouping and Regrouping	Teachers may group and regroup students within grades or teams to address individual learning needs.	The schedule provides limited opportunity to group and regroup students.	The organization of teachers and classes inhibits the regrouping of students for instruction.

(*Continued*)

(*Continued*)

	High	Medium	Low
Use of Space	The school allots space to provide teachers with various size rooms that can be used for the instructional program.	There is some limited flexibility in use of space.	Little or no space is provided for teachers to use for various instructional activities other than single classrooms.
Teachers Decide Use of Time	Individual teachers or teaching teams make decisions about the use of their instructional time.	Some flexibility is built into the schedule for teachers to allocate instructional time.	The schedule does not allow teachers to flexibly use classroom instructional time.

A Final Note

Managing the school schedule can present challenges. However, if you view the schedule as a tool, you can use it to facilitate growth in collaboration and to accomplish the instructional goals of your school.

Skills for Principals

- Be open to change and model collaboration that improves teaching and learning.
- Make a quality educational experience for students the school's first priority.
- Organize the school to maximize the focus on a quality learning experience for students.
- Align resources (time, people, and space) to achieve the school's vision and goals.

If You Would Like More Information . . .

Creative Scheduling for Diverse Populations in Middle and High Schools: Maximizing Opportunities for Learning by Elliott Merenbloom and Barbara Kalina.

Scheduling to Improve Student Learning by Ron Williamson.

This PowerPoint presentation provides information about elementary school schedules that support Professional Learning Communities: https://www.aea267.k12.ia.us/system/assets/uploads/files/380/we_need_more_time_becky_dufour.pdf

This PowerPoint presentation provides information about using schedules to build professional collaboration: www.doe.k12.de.us/cms/lib09/DE01922744/Centricity/Domain/141/CreatingMoreTimeEffectTeacherCollab.pdf

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