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# 1 Learning

Principals of high-performing schools are models of learning.

**D**uring our research, we examined each high-performing principal's background with respect to his or her approach to leadership. Without exception, principals asserted that they were lifelong learners and models of learning. We asked how they learned what they know and use in day-to-day school leadership; we also asked them *what* they had learned that they believed was most crucial to the successful practice of school leadership.

## HOW DID THEY LEARN?

How did high-performing principals learn what they know? Principals told us they learned a great deal from experience, especially from positive and negative role models they had encountered, and through trial and error.

### Learning From Positive and Negative Role Models

According to our findings, high-performing principals attributed much of their effectiveness to *disciplined reflection* throughout their careers as teachers, assistant principals, and principals on experiences with both positive (i.e., effective) and negative (i.e., ineffective) principals:

*I have been very blessed to have worked with excellent principals, assistant principals, and teachers—people who have accomplished a great deal; I have been able to ask all of them questions and figure out what makes them tick. I worked with a National Middle School Association principal-of-the-year; I really enjoyed working with her and getting her feelings about how to be an effective administrator. Prior to that, I worked with the faculty and staff in another school, which became a national School of Excellence. Those experiences were extremely helpful to me.*

—Middle School Principal

*I have been exposed to great leaders in my life, from a very young age until now. I was a teacher in a school where the principal empowered us. Then I was an assistant principal; and for seven years, I had conversations with many great principals. I have worked with principals who were both great leaders and great managers.*

—Elementary School Principal

*I took everything I could from the principals I knew—what to do and what not to do. The first principal we had, all he did was worry about how he looked. The second principal, all he did was worry about discipline; if you moved out of place, he got all over you. He jumped on me one time because I moved the seats in my classroom! Then there was the principal who was lazy; he did the announcements and then let the kids run the school. The next principal loved the kids, but he was disorganized, and the one after that was very organized but not very friendly. I got my organization skills from the last one.*

—Elementary School Principal

*I was an assistant principal, and I worked in the county office, and I worked with very effective and very ineffective principals. From them, I learned a lot about what to do and what not to do. I just absorbed it . . . and I find myself always thinking back to those experiences.*

—Elementary School Principal

## Learning Through Trial and Error

The principals we studied also learned to be exemplary leaders through trial and error:

*I think 99% of the job is learned through trial and error; that's just gut honest. My education classes were wonderful, and I had some great classes, but until you sit in that big chair behind that desk . . .*

—Middle School Principal

*I have changed . . . I have grown. We get older, learn from our mistakes, learn from our teachers, and try to get better.*

—Middle School Principal

*You realize very early on how all encompassing the role of principal is. It has changed and evolved to such a degree and so fast that the majority of things that I am doing now I learned by doing and reflecting on mistakes. I had good preparation, but there's no way you could be fully prepared to do this job. I didn't become a principal to be a project director for major construction at our school, but that's part of it.*

—High School Principal

## WHAT DID THEY LEARN?

What did high-performing principals learn from role models and through trial and error? We identified nine valuable lessons related to balance, hiring, life-long learning, communication, motivation, empowerment, recognition, visibility, and public relations.

### 1. High-Performing Principals Learned to Balance Their Personal and Professional Lives

Principals reported that after several years on the job and with “constant thinking and planning ahead” they learned to better balance their professional and personal lives. Fundamentally, this required a high degree of organization and reorganization of most aspects of the school (as discussed throughout this book) and their personal lives.

*Because of the hours, the stresses, the demands, you have to be very organized at school, have systems in place, and you have to organize your personal life as well.*

—Elementary School Principal

*I try not to make work my whole life, but I have to be careful. I have a husband who can certainly take care of himself, but I maintain my distance from work and my personal dignity by setting a time by which I am going to leave school; otherwise, I can be at work as late as 11:00 P.M. because I am new here, and I am still adjusting.*

—High School Principal

*There's a family factor, and you have to learn to balance work and home. I'm eleven years into it, and I'm better now than when I began; then, I was taking stuff home every night. But it can depend on what is going on; for example, at budget time, the budget's going home with me, and I am playing with it, manipulating things. And when I am doing annual summaries, I'm typing them out at home, but fast. I also do most of the accreditation report online at home.*

—Middle School Principal

### 2. High-Performing Principals Learned to Fill a School With Strong People

All principals who participated in our study discussed the importance of having strong people to create a high-performing school (see the discussion about hiring later in this book):

*Bottom line, you have to find good people and you have to make sure that everybody is basically on the same page. You have to let other people do things, and you have to let other people be leaders without losing touch with the direction things are going. In other words, you don't give it away, you entrust it.*

—Middle School Principal

*You've got to have people who have the strength of their convictions, who get the facts out, take decisive action at the right time, and who do what's right. There are very few things you can stew on.*

—High School Principal

*You've got to have the right people on the right bus in the right seats... committed to excellence.*

—Middle School Principal

High-performing principals suggested using the following general rule of thumb for balancing the work of administrative leadership and instructional leadership: Time should be devoted to teachers, students, and instructional leadership matters when teachers and students are in the building; time should be devoted to reports and other administrative leadership tasks that require concentrated effort when they can be completed more efficiently and effectively (i.e., before and after school, when teachers and students are not in the building).

### **3. High-Performing Principals Learned That Everyone (Starting With Themselves) Must Demonstrate Lifelong Learning**

Although the principals we studied excelled as educational leaders, they were not complacent; they modeled lifelong learning as they continued their journeys toward professional growth, and they included assistant principals and teachers in this journey:

*I constantly take professional learning classes, usually things that I am interested in. I have learned so much about the ways children learn—it's fascinating to me!*

—Elementary School Principal

*I try to read everything I can, be involved with county-level committees, and go to workshops so that I will have an understanding of some of the horizon issues, instead of just living day to day.*

—Elementary School Principal

*I try to model. I have read several of Todd Whitaker's books, which are very short. One that I keep as a handbook is Fourteen Things Effective Principals Do Differently, and one I gave all my teachers is What Great Teachers Do Differently. They are short reads, not laborious, and several teachers said, "You know, this is a great book. I read this part and thought I did that very well, but I also do that and it's not very good."*

—Elementary School Principal

*I read the educational research, and I think it's important for teachers to keep their fingers on the pulse of the research. Every Monday, I send out an instructional*

*bulletin covering priorities for the week; and in that, I encourage teachers by including something related to the research so they will have their curiosity piqued and pursue it.*

—High School Principal

#### **4. High-Performing Principals Learned to Develop and Sustain Good Communication and Constructive Relationships With Everyone**

According to our findings, principals worked to build mutual trust, treat people with respect, and care about people; these were considered essential to open and honest communication and constructive relationships between and among individuals and groups.

*When I first came in as principal, I set aside time to get to know people. I set up times for teachers to come in and just sit down and talk to me; it was rather scripted—kind of formal—but it gave me a good sense of who they were, and it broke the ice. Starting with relationships first has helped me tremendously, as not everyone will tell me when they like this initiative or that direction, but they know they can trust me, and they know that I'm not going to make a decision that is going to hurt the children or the school. I put them in front of those paper tasks, though I do have a reputation that things are in on time and done conscientiously.*

—Elementary School Principal

*Communication is one of those things I probably struggle with as much or more than anybody else, but I am learning to become a good communicator. One-on-one is where you start. You have to have respect for others and for their dignity or the work that they perform. It's important to build that mutual respect and trust when you speak with individuals or with small and large groups in meetings.*

—High School Principal

*Instructional leadership is about having frank conversations with people, but before you can do that you have to build up enough trust.*

—Elementary School Principal

*Anyone can be a good manager. During my first year as a principal, I managed people, and we didn't talk much. But I have evolved into an instructional leader with great communication and managerial skills.*

—Elementary School Principal

Principals also used e-mails, bulletins, newsletters, team minutes, and conversations to communicate with others. Timely communication (i.e., quick responses) to queries is essential.

*The grade-level teachers meet weekly and plan. If they need anything or have questions, they can note that at the end of their minutes, and I respond that evening before I go home or the next day so that there is a quick turnaround to concerns.*

—Elementary School Principal

*Every morning, I put out a bulletin to staff; it could be very lengthy if there is a current issue that affects everybody in the building, or it could be just kudos to an individual or grade level. There is usually some sort of inspirational quote that I put on there, too.*

—Middle School Principal

Moreover, high-performing principals reported that responsiveness to personal teacher requests was a priority. For instance, when a teacher requested a principal's recommendation for entry to graduate school, the principal responded immediately; prompt action demonstrated support of ongoing professional growth and showed appreciation for the teacher's contribution to the school. Most high-performing principals used a 24-hour turnaround rule regarding teacher requests of this nature; they stated that such responsiveness enhanced teachers' feelings of being valued, their job satisfaction, and school morale.

Several high-performing principals reported that they created opportunities for children to communicate directly with them.

*We are a school in which a child is listened to. Any child can come into the principal's office, take a Jolly Rancher (candy) from the bowl on my desk, and talk about problems. We may think something is great, but the kids think it stinks; even if the kid is off base, we need to know that.*

—Elementary School Principal

*I learn things that I didn't know about the teachers from the children, and it's really exciting and always very positive. But, there have been a few times in Principal's Lunch Bunch when I have heard something that makes me go back to ask the teacher to explain something, like "Johnny said you're not doing Digi-blocks though everybody else is doing Digi-blocks and he doesn't know what Digi-blocks are." Talking with kids is an effective tool.*

—Elementary School Principal

Principals recognized parents as stakeholders, valued their input, and created opportunities to communicate with them:

*My concept of shared decision making includes parents. You can have a school that falters if you don't keep abreast of parents' concerns. Shared decision making is listening to people's concerns and trying to strategize solutions that might be available.*

—High School Principal

*Whether I am communicating with parents or teachers, I think it all impacts student achievement. Having community support and parent support is especially important to effective instructional leadership. So, if you wait seven days before returning a parent's phone call about a concern, I think it can, in the long run, impact student achievement and instructional leadership by causing conversations to occur in the home about your failure to respond.*

—High School Principal

*You have to make sure parents don't feel like they are excluded. I have coffee with the parents four times a year; it is held in the morning, and they can bring their issues and concerns they want addressed.*

—High School Principal

*I communicate regularly with parents through a monthly newsletter, one of which I always dedicate to reading and what parents can do to help their child with it. Last year, I also dedicated one issue to math; in it, I explained details about the Everyday Math program.*

—Elementary School Principal

## **5. High-Performing Principals Learned to Motivate and Energize People**

Principals who participated in our study were very concerned with keeping teacher morale high; they believed that a “happy teacher is a better teacher” and routinely worked to inspire teachers:

*It is my job to inspire teachers, help them discover the realities of best practice, and move them collectively toward that.*

—Elementary School Principal

*I have to be a quality-plus leader. I have to have energy and passion for the job that I do. I have to be able to energize people around me and execute my role in order to achieve student success.*

—Elementary School Principal

Conversely, principals worked diligently to prevent teacher negativity, which they reported has an adverse effect on student achievement:

*Teacher negativity is the worst. Our teachers realize that I care about them and that if there's a problem we are going to work it out. I keep the staff morale up because if teachers are happy the kids are happy and they are learning, and then parents are happy.*

—Elementary School Principal

*I can't remember ever making a decision in the past four or five years without talking with some of the staff because decisions affect everybody, and it trickles down to the students. If the teachers aren't happy, their negativity is going to come out, and it's going to affect student achievement.*

—Elementary School Principal

*I'll play music in faculty meetings, and faculty members come in upbeat. I've said, "Last week we didn't have music and you were not nearly as upbeat as now, guys. I wonder how our kids would react if you picked a song appropriate to whatever you are teaching..."*

—Middle School Principal

## 6. High-Performing Principals Learned to Empower Others

All the principals we studied were, in varying but significant ways, strong advocates of empowerment (i.e., distributed and shared leadership). That is, they tended to include all relevant stakeholders in decision making, built trust with individuals and teams, shared power and responsibility/accountability, and encouraged ownership. *Ownership* refers to a deep, sustained commitment to school improvement goals based on stakeholders' internalization of core values, beliefs, ways of thinking, and behaviors reflected in school culture. This is discussed in more depth in Part II of this book.

*I believe in shared decision making, input from a variety of perspectives—teachers, parents, students, and staff. Shared decision making is listening to people's concerns and strategizing together to get solutions.*

—High School Principal

*I think one of the secrets to success is that I don't do it all myself. Instead, I work hard to effectively enable others to lead, to surround myself with capable, trusted, qualified leaders; and I don't mean just my administrative team, but the teachers, clerical staff, the lady who welcomes people at the front door while monitoring for security purposes. I think people welcome this, and I think that the wisest leader is one who surrounds him- or herself with excellence and then backs away and allows people to unveil their excellence.*

—Elementary School Principal

*My leadership style is to give teachers as much power as they need. I guide them and help them, but I don't guard them, and I'm getting the school as I always dreamed it should be: a garden for children, a place they can be happy and comfortable.*

—Elementary School Principal

*The principal cannot be the only one who is responsible any more; we all have to be responsible. I learn from my teachers, and I want them to be better than me. Whether I stay in this job or not, school success is based on what the teachers do.*

—Elementary School Principal



It is noteworthy that many of the individuals who participated in our study pointed out that during the initial phase of their careers as school principals they employed a strong, controlling “power over” approach to school leadership; however, over time, they evolved as “power with” leaders who trusted, respected, and supported others and worked collaboratively with others on *all* major aspects of school life.

*As an assistant principal, I had to complete so many tasks that I assumed that when I moved into the principal's role I would still have to hold on to all those tasks, to certify, seal, and deliver everything with my name and my handprints all over it. But you cannot do that as a principal; you have to evolve as a sharing personality, trusting others around you to do tasks with great quality. If it's less than great quality, we work together until we get quality. For that to happen, teacher leadership must exist throughout the entire building.*

—Elementary School Principal

*I didn't start out as an effective principal; I used to think I had to be in control. I quickly learned that I could not be the know all, be all, see all, do all for everything! I was turning myself into a miserable, frustrated person because I couldn't keep up with everything. I learned you can't control people; you can't coerce them; you have to work with them.*

—Elementary School Principal

*As a leader, I have learned—and I'm glad I learned the lesson early—that sometimes you have to be a good follower; you have to let other people lead, let them shine, help them feel important, and just stand behind them.*

—Middle School Principal

*I have changed in that I have mellowed. When I first became a principal, I thought that I would have control, but I learned that when you give power away, you get more power; that has been a grand experience for me because I had been brought up to believe that it is more blessed to give than to receive.*

—Elementary School Principal

Principals discussed the importance of delegating toward people's strengths and providing opportunities for risk taking to promote professional development:

*When you become a new principal, you tend to want to do it all, but it was learning to delegate that helped me balance instructional leadership with managerial tasks. (And, if you want to keep your family going, that has to be factored in.) I delegate to people's strengths but also give them jobs in which they can take risks so they can grow.*

—Middle School Principal

*We need to groom leaders, to even groom these young people—students—for leadership. We need teachers in the school who can lead others, pull people along; then, even if we are upset with each other, we work through it as professionals. I give people responsibilities, but then I start working and helping them to work on their weaknesses.*

—Elementary School Principal

*I have become more trusting of others' ability to do things, tasks of great quality. I had to release my mindset that I was the only one who could do something.*

—Elementary School Principal

Several high-performing principals reported that they maintained a summary of teacher strengths for easy reference. Summaries included (1) each member of the leadership team's independent assessment of the strengths of each faculty member; (2) teachers' assessment of their own strengths; (3) a comparison of leaders' and teachers' assessments; and (4) a comprehensive reference list for use when matching teachers' needs with accomplished teachers' skills, sending school representatives to serve on district committees, and writing annual evaluations.

Empowering others meant delegating to their strengths; it also meant blending strengths and helping individuals and teams to move in the right direction together.

*My role is to be the "better way" seeker at the school, the person who truly empowers people to be leaders, who moves us in the same direction. The system we build must be so strong that when I leave, our school will continue to move in the right direction, regardless of who sits in this office. To me, leadership is about empowering people around you to move in unison, almost like geese flying south with ease. That's really where the priority needs to be and that's what happens when you have all your systems in place.*

—Elementary School Principal

*I have to make sure that the whole operation of the school is sound. This requires good people who have strengths, and I need to make sure they have a lot of direction. They also have to have ownership in what they do, which means a great deal of input from them. You blend the different strengths and abilities people bring to the table.*

—Middle School Principal

In addition to sharing power and delegating to strengths, in many cases high-performing principals encouraged everyone, especially teachers, to share their knowledge and skills with their colleagues. (Instructional modeling and peer consultation will be discussed further in Part II of this book.)

*We have mentor teachers who show new teachers the ropes and add to their repertoire, like how to respond to certain circumstances like dealing with a smart-mouthed kid or a kid who just wants to sit and talk in class. I've also freed up time so teachers can plan and collaborate and come up with bright ideas. This brings people together so they can focus on certain goals.*

—High School Principal

*You don't want a faculty turning over every two or three years. So, we have teachers help one another by giving teachers who aspire to leadership positions some informal responsibilities in classroom observations. They observe and then suggest what they see as strengths and what might be improved on; this makes everyone a valuable member of the school who can also correct weaknesses, but it's nonthreatening and it doesn't produce any anxiety where a teacher freezes up.*

—High School Principal

*When I came to the school five years ago, there was no instructional leadership team, so I established a group of lead teachers, some of the best and the brightest, to build camaraderie within the teaching team.*

—Elementary School Principal

Principals disclosed that sharing power with others occasionally resulted in mistakes; thus, they stressed the importance of using a constructive approach that helped others learn and grow from such mistakes.

*To empower others you have to trust them and their abilities. When it doesn't work out, you put a bandage on the hurt feelings and move on, and you don't look at it as a disaster or make people feel bad because they perhaps misjudged something.*

—Middle School Principal

*I learned that I had to give other people the power and responsibility to do some things. I've known many principals who said, "Okay, you're in charge of—say—discipline," and then take it back by making some decision! I would never undermine anyone after I had given him or her the power, and if something didn't work we'd talk about it and maybe change what we do next time.*

—Elementary School Principal

## **7. High-Performing Principals Learned to Recognize Others**

Most of the principals we interviewed successfully created comprehensive and inclusive cultures of appreciation and recognition and motivational climates for all school-level personnel. For instance, principals encouraged all stakeholders to overtly recognize the range of contributions and achievements of others, as individuals and as groups (e.g., teachers, students, noncertified staff, parents, volunteers). In addition, principals initiated frequent daily verbal

acknowledgements for achievements and written recognition via e-mails, letters of recognition, certificates of achievement, a Principal's List, and "freebies."

High-performing principals also reported that they began faculty meetings with kudos for teachers and staff members and with requests for thoughts and support of those going through difficult or special times.

*You have to recognize people every time you have faculty meetings.*

—High School Principal

*I recognize students and teachers every morning, or a bookkeeper or our head custodian. I have these certificates of achievement that I give for whatever honor they have achieved.*

—High School Principal

High-performing principals also used classroom walk-throughs to acknowledge teachers' everyday contributions in the classroom. (This leadership behavior will be described in detail in Part II of this book.)

*Walk-throughs give us an opportunity to catch a teacher doing something good and to write something positive to them. That way, teachers know that you value and appreciate what is going on in the classroom.*

—High School Principal

They also used walk-throughs to "inspect what they expect." For example, one principal in our study described "5 by 5s," a classroom monitoring strategy she learned at a Max Thompson Learning-Focused Schools conference. Each member of her administrative team visited five classrooms per day for 5 minutes each. The faculty created a list of best practices for all classrooms, and teachers in the school expected all teachers to use these best practices. The administrative team members use a form that they developed to document what they observed during walk-throughs; the form includes a checklist of the school's adopted and implemented best practices.

Principals encouraged others to recognize staff, volunteers, and students for their work as well:

*I talk with students and parents about the importance of the noncertified staff, and I encourage them to do more to recognize them.*

—High School Principal

*When I see a volunteer in the building, I say, "Thank you for volunteering today," and I try to impress upon others to do the same. I can't force people to say thank you, but I try to model it in every way that I can.*

—Middle School Principal

*We recognize students individually and collectively and we let others be involved in it. As the school's instructional leader, I believe that the administrative team and I have to be at the forefront of putting students up front and making sure they are recognized for doing their best.*

—High School Principal

*I make sure that the faculty members I recommend for employment at this school understand that, as a team effort, we all have to be willing to support and recognize students outside of the classroom.*

—High School Principal

Principals argued that for students, in particular, an inclusive approach to recognition produced positive effects in the classroom.

*Students who participate in something more than lunch are more willing to do what you ask them to do—homework, being prepared for class, not being tardy, having their books and pencils, and being ready to learn.*

—High School Principal

## **8. High-Performing Principals Learned to Be Visible and to Maintain an Open-Door Policy**

A number of principals indicated that visibility at school-related events and recognition of students' accomplishments and parents' supportive roles were important symbolic responsibilities.

*Unless I'm out of town, I go to every single banquet, whether it's for fine arts, national honor society, football, basketball, volleyball. Sometimes, I go to four banquets in one night. I thank the kids for being there and for all their effort, for their performance—whatever it is—and their achievements. I thank the parents for supporting them, and I make it clear to the kids that they would not be there if not for their parents. I thank the coaches, teachers, and sponsors, and community members. I ask the senior students to raise their hands and remind them that this is their last banquet and say that I hope they are taking very good memories with them. It's the little thing that I do that takes only about 90 to 120 seconds, and then I go to the next banquet.*

—High School Principal

*It's important to include every student group, to not overlook or sidestep any group. It's impossible to be at every event, but we try to get a good balance, and someone from the administrative team will always be there if at all possible.*

—High School Principal

Principals also explained that having an open door policy—being accessible and approachable—was a form of visibility, and that it provided timely opportunities to respond to teachers’ concerns.

*If I am in my office and people need to talk with me about something, I encourage it. I am very approachable, I’m up front, and I’m a good listener. People need to feel they have a way to communicate with you, but with the former principal, the door was never open; the secretary guarded the gate and kept the staff at bay.*

—Middle School Principal

*I make myself available part of every class period, so that teachers or groups on their planning time who need me can access me and I can address their immediate needs. It doesn’t require them to come in early or stay late.*

—Middle School Principal

*I tell the staff that they are more than welcome to knock on my door or open the door for me to respond to them, unless I am in a private conference with a parent or teacher. Once in a blue moon, I isolate myself. I close the door to work on something, but that takes second, third, or fourth place to the needs of the children and staff.*

—Elementary School Principal

## 9. High-Performing Principals Learned to Establish and Maintain Good Public Relations

Principals learned that good public relations require communication and interaction with various community groups.

*In public relations, I am talking about listening and then reacting. It’s interfacing with a variety of groups to share important information about the school.*

—High School Principal

Planning for good public relations is essential, according to our data. To illustrate, one principal discussed an “Annual Community Relations Plan,” which included creating newsletters, maintaining a school marquee, and developing phone masters (directories). Newsletters, the school marquee, and Web sites were identified as major mechanisms used to communicate with parents. Principals also planned student recognition and parent appreciation events as part of their public relations programs. Planning to create good will and figuring out ways community groups could help improve the school were also discussed. Good will was seen as especially useful when mistakes were made.

*You have to work hard, and you have to let people in the community know you are working hard. Then when you make a mistake, your community will be supportive; they remember you've had lots of successes in other areas.*

—Middle School Principal

District- and school-level committees initiated climate surveys to formally elicit feedback about community satisfaction. In addition to expecting teachers and assistant principals to find ways to supplement what was being done in the classroom, high-performing principals encouraged parental involvement in decision-making processes to improve school climate and classroom instruction. These and a range of informal interactions with groups and individuals constituted the evaluation component of public relations.

At the same time, principals stressed that efficient execution of public relations plans was necessary for good public relations, asserting, for example, “You don’t want to spend an inordinate amount of time on it.” Consequently, principals created structures such as the School Governance Council or similar committees to organize and coordinate work with parents, students, and community groups. Furthermore, principals and assistant principals and technology leaders shared responsibility for attending important meetings (e.g., PTSA) and events (e.g., athletic games, Senior Night, Open House).

*It takes all of us; we spread ourselves out, and we try to make sure that none of us works more than three nights a week.*

—High School Principal

## SUMMARY

Chapter 1 explored *learning*, the first of nine action foci of high-performing principals. The chapter dealt with how and what high-performing principals learned as they became high-performing school leaders. What they learned included a number of core leadership skills including balancing personal and professional spheres of life; hiring strong people; life-long learning; communicating and developing constructive relationships; motivating, empowering, and recognizing others; being visible; and maintaining good public relations. Readers should keep in mind that becoming a high-performing principal requires *critical reflection* on experience, not simply experience itself; such reflection is an essential component of lifelong learning.

## TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS

### Increasing Teacher Positivity and Decreasing Teacher Negativity

1. Ensure that work time and workloads are equitable among teachers. Make analysis of work time and duties a routine procedure when assigning duties and developing schedules. Publish teaching and duty assignments to demonstrate your concern for fairness and equity.
2. Adopt a policy requiring that a parent who has a concern about a teacher address that concern with the teacher before seeking an administrator's involvement. Communicate this policy to parents in writing and at meetings. Ask those who answer the school phone to remind parents of this policy.
3. Encourage a norm of public positivity and private negativity. Develop a system for private and/or anonymous reporting of concerns, issues, grievances, and complaints and for addressing the same.
4. Use uplifting notes and inspirational stories to express gratitude to individuals for what they do.

### Empowering Teachers

1. Encourage innovation and risk taking.
2. Reward good work with detailed, specific praise and public recognition; if the budget permits, provide a gift card to the local school-resource store.
3. Involve teachers in all instructional decision making.
4. Involve teachers in reflective problem solving.
5. Defer to teachers as the experts when appropriate.
6. Build capacity to lead, then step back and follow the lead of those you have empowered.

### Handing Over Responsibility for Critical Tasks

1. When assigning tasks, meet with the responsible faculty members to discuss your expectations for the process and work. Set guidelines for time frames and quality of the work.
2. Communicate your trust of and respect for the faculty as professionals capable of producing a quality product.
3. Hand over the reins of power and assume a "mentor and resource" role.
4. Drop in on faculty work sessions to lend support and monitor progress.
5. Provide positive feedback.
6. Give credit.
7. Celebrate efforts and showcase the products.

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### **Tapping Teachers as Resources for Teacher Growth**

1. Develop a directory of in-house talents and resources. Publish the directory for teachers and encourage teachers to tap the in-house talent.

### **Walk-Throughs**

1. Walk-throughs should occur not only during teaching time but also during planning time to ensure effective, productive use of planning time and to ensure that planning time is not used as personal time.
2. Establish a quota of daily walk-throughs for administrators. Monitor compliance with the quota and identify obstacles to meeting walk-through quotas. Brainstorm ways, such as staggered walk-through times, to overcome obstacles.

### **Visibility (Walk-Abouts)**

1. Maintain visibility through walk-about (i.e., walking through the school at various times of the day). Visit key spots, such as the cafeteria during breakfast and lunch times, buses when loading and unloading, before-school tutoring areas, bathrooms during transitions, and after-school extracurricular activities. Use checklists to ensure that administrators are regularly seen in all of these locations daily.

### **School Climate**

1. Ask faculty and staff to design and to complete an anonymous climate survey. Analyze and present the data from the survey. Brainstorm an action plan with the faculty and staff to address areas of deficiency.
2. Create a list of offensive principal practices (i.e., The Do Nots of Effective School Leadership), and reflect on and self-evaluate against that list at the beginning, middle, and end of every year.