
Preface

Now that I'm here, where am I?

—Janice Joplin

Pathways to curriculum leadership may be well traversed or newly blazed. However, the curricular trail for many principals is seldom easily trod. Sometimes, principals serving as curriculum leaders wonder if they are on a rocky footpath to a steep mountain grade or in the fast lane of a superhighway or seeking an approaching expressway off-ramp to a safer, more secure, and less traveled front-age road. Such is curriculum leadership—finding the right curricular approach, without detour, in pursuit of organizational excellence, instructional expertise, and academic achievement for all students.

We have purposefully incorporated a “road less traveled” analogy in our Preface as a means of suggesting to the reader that effective curriculum leadership must go beyond traveling the beaten path that continually leads to a curricular destination where far too many principals have tread: The same old place doing the same old thing! We intimate such because it has been said that curriculum is a topic about which just about everyone has extensive knowledge because most have been to school. In reality, few can even define the term. This is not meant to demean. It is simply a fact, and one all too often associated with school principals.

Janice Joplin posed a thought-provoking question so relatable to the topic of curriculum leadership—“Now that I’m here, where am I?” (Echols, 2000). Permit *The Principal’s Guide to Curriculum Leadership* to reveal the “where am I” in connection with curricular leadership by forging detectable footprints to be followed, thus directing school leaders to a wide and open roadway where all can clearly see beyond the long shadows of curricular avoidance and organizational mediocrity. Therefore, *The Principal’s Guide to Curriculum Leadership* is written

to assist principals and prospective principals in understanding the meaning of curriculum as well as curriculum development, integration, evaluation, reform, and renewal.

Principals who desire to enhance their curricular leadership skills will value this book. The book is more than a desk reference or resource. It has been purposefully written to introduce the school leader to effective curricular and instructional techniques and methods and to further allow the leader to apply knowledge gained from the chapter readings directly to the field of practice. *The Principal's Guide to Curriculum Leadership* provides real examples—through practical application, relevant scenarios, and applicable case studies—all designed to better illustrate how principals can become effective curriculum leaders who possess the skills and abilities to guide faculty and students to a new era in curriculum development, instructional initiatives, and programmatic quality and distinction.

To ensure the book's usefulness, it has been purposely organized into brief, single-topic-focused chapters. Each chapter begins with an appropriate quote and general overview and includes numerous visuals, tables, figures, and practical activities of relevance and interest—each related to the field of administrative practice and curriculum leadership:

Chapter 1, *Defining Curriculum Leadership*, introduces the reader to Principal Will Wonkermann of Childers School; a character-theme is interweaved throughout the text. This chapter presents three organizational factors that influence curriculum leadership—loose coupling, systems thinking, and collaboration—detailing how each of these factors impacts curriculum leadership.

Chapter 2, *A Curriculum Leadership Journey*, investigates the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards relative to the curriculum leadership role. Readers are taken on an imaginary journey through the standards via the imagination of Principal Will Wonkermann. This journey follows a different kind of yellow brick road. So put on your ruby-red Reeboks, tap your heels together three times, and say, "There's no place like an effective school!"

Chapter 3, *Principal Expectations as Curriculum Leader*, investigates how high expectations are the key to effective curriculum leadership. High expectations improve instruction, increase faculty performance and student achievement, and equate to overall curricular improvement.

Chapter 4, *The Principal's Role in Curriculum Change and Innovation*, details how a principal can incorporate curricular change as a means of removing causal factor barriers that inhibit instructional improvement and hinder student achievement.

Chapter 5, *Curriculum Leadership in Action*, presents an examination of the principal role in curriculum design and development expanding on Walker's Deliberative Model of Curricular Planning. This chapter explores how principals can monitor the curriculum process from the initial development of a curriculum platform, through the deliberation phase of curriculum development, and onto the campus design and implementation stages of successful curriculum revision and reform.

Chapter 6, *Where the Action Is: Building Relationships With Teachers*, acknowledges how critical it is for principals as curriculum leaders to establish relationships of trust and understanding with faculty and staff. The chapter examines how principals must build a culture free of fear, a teaching/learning arena in which personnel collaborate, and a risk-free environment where meaningful discussions are the norm relative to curriculum development, reform, and revision.

Chapter 7, *Systematically Integrating Curriculum and Instruction*, examines how principals can lead curricular improvement by integrating curriculum and instruction, which allows faculty to focus on interdisciplinary actions that effectively correlate with student interest, relevant lessons, and meaningful learning.

Chapter 8, *Professional Learning and Curriculum Leadership*, permits the reader to better understand the leadership role in professional development and how professional learning influences the development, renewal, and delivery of curriculum. Building teacher capacity to best impact effective curriculum leadership and development is also examined.

Chapter 9, *The Principal and Legislated Learning: Working the System and the Prospects of Curriculum Renewal*, examines the role of legislated or mandated learning and its relationship with curriculum renewal in schools. Readers learn of the process of curriculum renewal and change in an era of shrinking curriculum development and renewal when the demands of corporate America and the mandates of federal and state legislatures dictate public school curriculum. The question to consider throughout

this chapter is, What's a principal to do to bring about needed curriculum renewal to our schools?

Chapter 10, *Trailblazing Digital Curriculum Leadership* 101, introduces the reader to digital curriculum leadership, essential in an era of systemic change. This chapter reminds, if not challenges, the educational leader of the necessity to explore new technologies, analyze technological trends, and confront technical realities as related to curriculum development and reform. In this chapter, the reader will examine curricular methods that correspond to the creation of a digital learning environment. Moreover, the reader will learn of digital procedures as correlated with curriculum implementation via voices from the field of practice.

The Epilogue, the "bow that tops the package," has been designed to connect the 10 chapters of *The Principal's Guide to Curriculum Leadership* and, thus, help the reader conceptually grasp the textual contents. The Epilogue, in the literary world, often details the fate of a book's main character or characters. To some degree, such is true of this book's main character, Will Wonkermann. Now, be patient and wait until you have read the first 10 chapters before turning to the epilogue!

Special features of the book include the following:

- Discussion questions
- Case study applications and problems
- Experiential activities, scenarios, and exercises
- References and resources

Will Wonkermann, Principal of Childers School

A very unique aspect of this book intertwines, from chapter-to-chapter, a lead character by the name of Will Wonkermann, principal at Childers School. Principal Wonkermann helps direct the reader along a continuous and thematic pathway, allowing for a better understanding of the curriculum leadership role. Will Wonkermann is introduced in the book as a relatively new principal at a school with instructional and organizational challenges. He becomes the vehicle throughout the book to represent you the reader. Principal Wonkermann, like you, yearns to be an effective leader. He is

eager to learn and explore curriculum leadership processes. Will Wonkermann brings to life a good story, along with interesting characters throughout the text. Who doesn't enjoy a good story? We invite you to actively engage in Principal Wonkermann's embedded story, and the stories of others, as a method of learning more about curriculum leadership. See yourself in these stories. See your colleagues. See how you can change your personal story and the stories of others through effective curriculum leadership.

Finally, *The Principal's Guide to Curriculum Leadership* has been written to provide the principal with essential information and fundamental skills vital to the successful partnering of curriculum and instruction, all designed to benefit our schools' most precious commodity—students—who must always come first and foremost in every curricular decision and instructional effort.

We commend you to the rich and descriptive processes of effectively leading curriculum development, integration, reform, evaluation, and renewal—each of which is depicted in this book for informational reading as well as for content understanding, in-depth analysis, and practical application. May this text lead the reader in the direction of an exciting quest that follows a roadway of proven theory leading to an avenue of essential practice!

We also welcome your feedback as to how we can better enhance the next edition of *The Principal's Guide to Curriculum Leadership*. Your ideas and suggestions can be shared with us by writing or e-mailing Corwin at 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks, California 91320–2218 (Corwin.com).

*Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where
there is no path and leave a trail.*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson