

# Qualities of effective principals

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Qualities of Effective Principals Cross-posted at the Huffington Post: Effective Leadership in the Age of Reform. School improvement efforts rely heavily on quality leadership. Educational leaders are tasked with establishing a collective vision for school improvement and initiating change to spur innovation, ensure student learning, and increase achievement. On July 13th I had the pleasure of hearing Dr. James Strong, from the College of William and Mary, deliver a keynote address at the NJ Department of Education Leadership Institute entitled “ Qualities of Effective Principals. ” Dr. Strong emphasized that the job of a principal, or school leader for that matter, is about making a difference in the lives of children. Leading and teaching is challenging work that requires a high level of understanding and patience. What do good principals do? The audience at the leadership institute identified what they perceived to be the top elements. These included the following items below where I have added some of my personal thoughts: \* Great communicator: Principals need to be able to communicate what the school is all about. School leaders don’t always do the best in terms of epitomizing effective communication. In terms of evaluations, we can’t keep telling teachers that they are doing good work when they are not. Being a direct communicator is often lost during discussions on teacher performance. \* Difference maker: Principals need to be able to keep the focus on important initiatives and culture characteristics that have an impact on student learning and achievement. They establish accountability measures to hold teachers and students accountable for learning. Great principals see solutions, not just problems. \* Risky, but not too risky: Principals have to be willing to try new things and have a mindset to keep

trying until improvement is the end result. They need a backstop of support that allows them to fail in these efforts. The most effective decision makers take risks, but do not bet the farm or take quantum leaps without knowing the end result.

- \* **Manage by walking around:** Principals that consistently walk around know the students, can better identify areas where teachers can improve, and set the tone for practices to be emulated throughout the building. The human factor is extremely important. Great principals establish a positive school culture by treating people the way they would like to be treated. How we smile, say hello, and engage in conversations all are important factors in setting a positive tone.
- \* **Address problems:** Strong principals will do the hard, dissatisfying work associated with addressing and removing ineffective staff. This requires addressing problems head on with a positive attitude. When hiring new staff, principals need to go to great efforts to hire educators that align best with the vision of the school.
- \* **Cares about students and staff:** Effective principals never give up on kids and their support staff. They are the epitome of instructional leadership and will show teachers how to become more effective based on evaluative data. As noted by Dr. Strong, the elements above are important at a personal level. He then identified the following indicators of principal quality that is supported by research.
- \* **Instructional leadership:** building a vision, establishing a shared leadership model, leading a learning community, using data, and monitoring curriculum & instruction. The most effective teachers seamlessly use multiple instructional strategies during a lesson and good principals can identify them.
- \* **School climate:** creating a positive culture, establishing high expectations, adhering to a practice of respect.
- \* **Human**

resource administration: hiring quality teachers & other staff, inducting & supporting current staff, providing meaningful opportunities for growth, retaining quality staff, and effectively evaluating teacher performance. \*

Organization management: safety, daily operations, facilities maintenance, and securing & using resources to increase student achievement. \*

Communication and community relations: effective communicator with all stakeholder groups. \* Professionalism: ethical standards, serves as a role model, models life-long learning. Now more than ever schools need great leaders. As the reform movement continues to swell across the country more eyes will be on the principal, as well as other district leaders, and their ability to ensure student learning and increase achievement. The task now at hand is to develop a plan on how to support principal effectiveness while developing an evaluation tool that will help us do the best job possible for the students that we serve. Ref: <http://esheninger.blogspot.com/2011/07/qualities-of-effective-principals.html>

PRINCIPALS The role of the principal is to lead and manage the planning, delivery, evaluation and improvement of the education of all students in a community through the strategic deployment of resources provided by the Department and the school community. A key component of this role is to increase the knowledge base of teachers within their school about student learning and quality teacher practice. At the same time, the principal, as executive officer of the school council, must ensure that adequate and appropriate advice is provided to the council on educational and other matters; that the decisions of the council are implemented; and that adequate support and resources are provided for the conduct of council meetings. Principals have a clear set

of accountabilities, which distinguish their work from other members of the principal and teacher class and the education community and are set out in detail in the contract of employment. The principal is accountable for the overall leadership, management and development of the school within statewide guidelines and Government policies. The core accountabilities of all principals are to: ^ Ensure the delivery of a comprehensive, high quality education program to all students. ^ Be executive officer of the school council. ^ Implement decisions of the school council. ^ Establish and manage financial systems in accordance with the Department and school council requirements. ^ Represent the Department in the school and the local community. ^ Contribute to system-wide activities, including policy and strategic planning and development. ^ Effectively manage and integrate the resources available to the school. ^ Appropriately involve staff, students and the community in the development, implementation and review of school policies, programs and operations. ^ Report to the Department, school community, parents and students on the achievements of the school and of individual students as appropriate. ^ Comply with regulatory and legislative requirements and Department policies and procedures. Ref: [http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/Roles\\_and\\_responsibilities-TS.pdf](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/Roles_and_responsibilities-TS.pdf)

Taking the Lead: The Role of the Principal in School Research tells us that principals are the linchpins in the enormously complex workings, both physical and human, of a school. The job calls for a staggering range of roles: psychologist, teacher, facilities manager, philosopher, police officer, diplomat, social worker, mentor, PR director, coach, cheerleader. The principalship is both lowly and

lofty. In one morning, you might deal with a broken window and a broken home. A bruised knee and a bruised ego. A rusty pipe and a rusty teacher. – Lee Sherman (in *The New Principal: NW Education*, Spring 2000) The job of a principal can indeed be staggering in its demands, particularly in the context of school reform. The picture that Sherman paints of the “ new” principal is a far cry from the traditional administrator of decades past. The job has evolved significantly over the last twenty years, and today’s principal is constantly multi-tasking and shifting roles at a moment’s notice. Barbara Trousdale, principal of Ysleta Middle School in El Paso, Texas, thrives on the many demands of her job. “ The daily challenge of handling multiple tasks is what I love most about being a principal. Each day provides new experiences and opportunities to be truly creative in solving problems. It allows me opportunities to involve others in problem solving, to model the very behaviors which I hope they’ll repeat with students and colleagues. It is teaching at its best–yes, principals are teachers too! ” Focusing on the many roles of the principalship highlights some basic characteristics of effective principals that are especially important for leading a school in the process of implementing a reform program. The principal as psychologist. In today’s schools, effective principals are accessible to every student and teacher, acting as a sounding board for both ideas and emotions. In contrast with the stereotypical principal of past generations who was a stern disciplinarian, principals today are more often than not providing support and praise or guiding staff through the inevitable bumps and bruises that come with implementing change in a school. By truly listening to what teachers and students are saying, a principal can continuously take stock of the school

culture and use feedback to make reform efforts more effective. The principal as teacher. From their own teaching experiences, principals can have valuable insight into the challenges teachers face in the classroom. But they must also position themselves as guides and as models for teachers who, in the face of significant change, have to become learners themselves. Knowledge about research supporting a school's reform model, an understanding of data utilization, and continuous, intensive professional development are all crucial in establishing the knowledge base necessary to support reform. In *A New Vision for Staff Development* (Sparks and Hirsh, 1997), elementary school principal Rosie O'Brian Votjek talks about leading a change-focused school: " I served as a facilitator, consultant, instructor, and colleague who assisted teachers in integrating curriculum and using new instructional practices. . . . I promoted different kinds of staff development, but the most important thing I did was ' walk the talk.'" The principal as facilities manager. Although it is not the most glamorous aspect of the job, a principal's role in overseeing the physical structures of the school is key. Kathy Anderson, principal of Tom Elementary in Haworth, Oklahoma, laughs, " I frequently find myself doing custodial work. Whatever it takes to keep the school running. " A functional school is not enough, though. Researchers have discovered that the physical condition of a school can make a difference in student achievement (Council for Educational Development and Research, 1997). The physical aspects of a school need to reflect the vision for reform: examples of students' work displayed on the walls, clean, bright spaces that exhibit pride in the schools' appearance, classrooms that allow for flexibility in different seating arrangements, and adequate resources for

both students and teachers. The principal as philosopher. A philosopher is often thought of as having his “ head in the clouds. ” But a principal’s lofty perspective is as necessary to the life of a school as his practicality. Frequently, as Thomas Sergiovanni (1984) observes, “ The principal is... the one who seeks to define, strengthen, and articulate those enduring values, beliefs, and cultural strands that give the school its identity. ” In helping to shape the vision, a principal must work to include all of the stakeholders throughout the entire change process. This inclusion helps ensure not only the buy-in of the stakeholders, but also an increased sense of empowerment and greater potential for long-term sustainability of the school’s reform efforts. A philosopher is often thought of as having his “ head in the clouds. ” But a principal’s lofty perspective is as necessary to the life of a school as his practicality. Frequently, as Thomas Sergiovanni (1984) observes, “ The principal is... the one who seeks to define, strengthen, and articulate those enduring values, beliefs, and cultural strands that give the school its identity. ” In helping to shape the vision, a principal must work to include all of the stakeholders throughout the entire change process. This inclusion helps ensure not only the buy-in of the stakeholders, but also an increased sense of empowerment and greater potential for long-term sustainability of the school’s reform efforts. The principal as police officer. This role shouldn’t be seen as a mandate for a principal to enforce rules. Rather, principals work to create a safe school environment, to make their presence known by “ walking their beats, ” and to “ keep the peace ” through conflict-resolution and mediation. A principal’s skill in promoting healthy, productive interactions among the staff is valuable, particularly in making sure that both negative



and positive feedback is heard and considered, effectively giving teachers “power” to participate in decisionmaking and enact change in the school. The principal as mentor. As a mentor, a principal shares professional knowledge with teachers, but also, according to Liz Melson, a principal at Jefferson High School in San Antonio, “models ‘expected behavior’ for teachers; communicates a willingness to be open, nonjudgmental, yet focused; creates a vision and confidence that there are no insurmountable obstacles to dreams, wishes, and potentials; and advocates for their rights and needs. The principal as social worker. The role of a principal as social worker can encompass work in fostering collaboration with families and other community groups to support students. Another part of the principal’s role as social worker is to establish a safe and comfortable environment, one in which students can grow academically and emotionally, Sharing the Lead and Sharing the Load You’re probably thinking to yourself at this point, “It’s too much. How can any one person possibly be all those things?” Well, the good news is that one important role was left out of Sherman’s description—the principal as collaborator. There are many benefits of sharing the responsibility and the rewards of leadership with teachers, administrators, students, parents, and community members. The most immediate benefit of leadership as a collaborative effort is that principals not only share the lead, but share the load. However, collaboration of this nature is not merely delegation. C. Cryss Brunner (1999) discusses collaboration versus delegation in a list of tips developed for superintendents. The concept can apply to all leaders, though. In the collaboration process, principals “do not turn decisions over to individuals or groups. Instead, they remain active in

the decisionmaking process, giving themselves one vote when the decision is made. " While it can be difficult to trust in the decisionmaking ability of others and to give up some of the power of the position, there is also a kind of freedom in the process. The weight of important decisions is carried more easily by many shoulders. Another reason that shared leadership is critical lies in its potential for engaging stakeholders, especially teachers, more fully in the reform process. Linda Lambert (1998) explains: " When we equate the powerful concept of leadership with the behaviors of one person, we are limiting the achievement of a broadbased participation by a community or a society. School leadership needs to be a broad concept that is separated from person, role, and a discrete set of individual behaviors. It needs to be embedded in the school community as a whole. Such a broadening of the concept of leadership suggests shared responsibility for a shared purpose of a community. " Lastly, when shared leadership is " embedded in the school community as a whole, " there is a much greater potential for long-term sustainability of reform. By taking a collective responsibility for leadership, the school's staff can help prevent a collapse of the reform program in the face of shifting personnel, even through a change of principal. The strength that comes from this kind of collaboration is much like the strength of fabric woven from many different threads. Individually, those threads are easily broken, but as an integrated whole, the cloth is strong and not likely to unravel from the loss of one thread. The sometimes overwhelming demands of being a principal make the strength that comes from shared leadership a vital resource. And in facing the demands that go along with implementing school reform, strength may be the most important characteristic for a

principal to have. References Council for Educational Development and Research (CEDaR) (1997, Spring). Designing school facilities for learning. Washington, DC: CEDaR. Fleming, G. (1999). Principals and teachers: Continuous learners. *Issues...about Change* 7 (2), 3. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. . Imagine a school where teachers, staff, administrators, parents, students, and community members all work together to make the school a better place. Teachers mentor each other, freely comparing and sharing instructional ideas. The principal listens to the concerns of everyone affected by an issue and works with them to develop a thoughtful solution. Parents actively support and seek to educate themselves about the school's reform program. Students act as community ambassadors, accompanying the principal to meetings to show off newly acquired technology skills to various community groups.

Structure of a Critical Review

HEADING: (cover page) Introduction

The length of an introduction is usually one paragraph for a journal article review and two or three paragraphs for a longer book review. Include a few opening sentences that announce the author(s) and the title, and briefly explain the topic of the text. Present the aim of the text and summarize the main finding or key argument. Conclude the introduction with a brief statement of your evaluation of the text. This can be a positive or negative evaluation or, as is usually the case, a mixed response.

Author's Purpose/Author's Arguments

Every book is written for a purpose, and usually the author will tell you directly what it is that he/she is trying to argue or demonstrate in the book. It may be stated in an introduction or first chapter. Such a statement, if found, might be a good thing to quote. This should be included in your review.

**Summary** Present a summary of the key points along with a limited number of examples. You can also briefly explain the author's purpose/intentions throughout the text and you may briefly describe how the text is organized.

The summary should only make up about a third of the critical review.

**Critique/Evaluation** The critique should be a balanced discussion and evaluation of the strengths, weakness and notable features of the text.

Remember to base your discussion on specific criteria. Good reviews also include other sources to support your evaluation (remember to reference).

You can choose how to sequence your critique. Here are some examples to get you started:

- Most important to least important conclusions you make about the text.
- If your critique is more positive than negative, then present the negative points first and the positive last.
- If your critique is more negative than positive, then present the positive points first and the negative last.
- If there are both strengths and weakness for each criterion you use, you need to decide overall what your judgment is. For example, you may want to comment on a key idea in the text and have both positive and negative comments. You could begin by stating what is good about the idea and then concede and explain how it is limited in some way. While this example shows a mixed evaluation, overall you are probably being more negative than positive.
- In long reviews, you can address each criteria you choose in a paragraph, including both negative and positive points. For very short critical reviews (one page or less) where your comments will be briefer, include a paragraph of positive aspects and another of negative.
- You can also include recommendations for how the text can be improved in terms of ideas, research approach; theories or frameworks used can also be included

in the critique section. Conclusion This is usually a very short paragraph. - Restate your overall opinion of the text. - Briefly present recommendations. - If necessary some further qualification or explanation of your judgment can be included. This can help your critique sound fair and reasonable.

References If you have used other sources in you review you should also include a list of references at the end of the review. A to Z Teaching of FE by Angela Steward About the Author Dr Angela Steward has taught for over thirty years in the FE sector. She currently teaches Education Studies at the Centre for Continuing Professional Development at City College Norwich, UK. Angela is also a consultant for the East of England Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training and a fellow of the Institute for Learning. Intended for teachers and college leaders, this title includes an array of entries - from practical teaching tips for the classroom to explanations of legislation and teaching styles. The " Essential FE Toolkit" is Continuum's brand new series on Further Education (FE) for teachers and college leaders. The series boasts 24 specialist, fact-filled volumes written by FE experts with significant knowledge and experience in their individual fields. Competitively priced, compact and accessible, each book should prove essential reading for FE lecturers and managers. This informative and humorous " A to Z of Teaching in Further Education" includes a huge array of entries - from practical teaching tips for the classroom to more detailed explanations of recent legislation and teaching styles. Each letter contains one detailed entry and several shorter ones, ranging from assessment to inclusion, and Foundation degrees to Vocational Education and Training. Realistic and helpful, Angela Steward's advice will prove invaluable when things get really tough. This

book is directed at those who teach in the further education system of UK. Its strength is in how it combines the author's research and personal experience to provide well-informed advice and guidance. It deals with teaching in a generic way that applies to all the disciplines and professional areas of the current FE curriculum. For these reasons it is solidly based in the author's theoretical understanding of the learning / teaching process, and it offers constant practical advice on the teaching process. The book would be very helpful to newly appointed lecturers as well as being a useful revision text for those with more experience. Teacher trainers would also find it particularly helpful as a basic set text. The key headword for each letter is listed below: A = Assessment B = Behaviour C = Curriculum D = Deep learning E = Emotional intelligence F = Formal presentations G = Gaining access H = HE supervision I = Ince breakers J = Journal writing K = Knowledge L = Learning Needs M = Multiple Intelligences N = New technology O = One-to-one tutorials P = Planning programmes Q = Quality evaluation R = Reflection S = Session plans T = Teaching style U = Using practitioner research V = VAK W = Working in groups X = Xtra support Y = Young learners Z = Zone proximal development. Steward (City College, Norwich, UK) makes good use of her three decades in further education (FE) by offering sound advice to new instructors in a remarkably accessible format, with entries arranged alphabetically so you can easily seek inspiration as you travel from part-time teaching job to part-time teaching job on the on the bus. She offers one extended entry and a variety of shorter ones for each letter of the alphabet, and although American readers may be confused by some of the acronyms and regulatory authorities, her comments

on such issues as behavior, constructivism, emotional intelligence, gender, jargon, key skills, new technologies, planning programs, race relations, teaching style, and uncertainty successfully cross the pond. Ideal for newcomers, this also serves grizzled veterans who are becoming increasingly grizzled. Conflict Resolution and Peace Education About the Author Candice C. Carter Ph. D. is an Associate Professor at the University of North Florida. Her research and scholarship topics include: conflict transformation, peace policy, multicultural education, history/social studies instruction, citizenship education, peace education, peace through arts, peace literature, and teacher training. She serves in many international and national peace, education and policy organizations. Dr. Carter designs and facilitates peace education programs in all levels of education, including the interdisciplinary Conflict Transformation Program at the University of North Florida. Her publications in journals and books include a multitude of topics related to peace and human relations. The book she co-edited *Chicken Soup for the Soul, Stories for a Better World*(<http://chickensoup.peacestories.info>) has 101 true stories about conflict transformation in many different situations while the *Journal of Stellar Peacemaking* she edits incorporates nonfiction, research and the arts to illustrate peace processes. The forthcoming book she is co-editing for Palgrave Macmillan, *Peace Philosophy in Action*, presents the philosophical foundation of recent peace initiatives. While featuring field-based examples in multiple disciplines, including political science, anthropology, communication, psychology, sociology, law and teacher training, this book presents real cases of conflict work. Explained are concepts underlying conflict transformation and strategies that

have been adapted for use in professional practice. This book contributes to the field of peace education with examples in the disciplines of political science, communication, psychology, sociology, counseling, law and teacher training. It presents new information about peace education in higher education. Provided are concepts underlying, and examples of, conflict transformation across disciplines while it demonstrates how some of the strategies are adapted for use in professional practice. Ultimately, the book and its individual chapters support peace studies and professionals who specialize in conflict work. This text can be used in courses in any of the fields mentioned above, and in others where there is a goal of learning strategies for conflict transformation. The interdisciplinary presentation provides subject versatility while it illustrates the multiple dimensions and applications of peace education. " Peace is the cornerstone of our survival as humans. It is imperative for PEACE to have a prominent place in education. The book " Conflict Resolution and PEACE Education" provides this supreme human value a status in learning."--Desmond M. Tutu, Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town. Peace Prize Nobel Laureate Peace education includes lessons about conflict sources, transformation and resolution. While featuring field-based examples in multiple disciplines, including political science, anthropology, communication, psychology, sociology, counseling, law and teacher training, this book presents real cases of conflict work. Explained are concepts underlying conflict transformation and strategies that have been adapted for use in professional practice. The contributors describe formal peace education with university students in different fields of study and informal learning of adults in community settings. Comprehensively, this



book supports professionals who specialize in conflict work as well as instructors and learners in several disciplines which all respond to conflict. "Peace education is a participatory holistic process that includes teaching for and about democracy and human rights, nonviolence, social and economic justice, gender equality, environmental sustainability, disarmament, traditional peace practices, international law, and human security" (Hague Appeal for Peace, 2005) Conflict Resolution Education is typically understood to focus on the local/domestic level while the focus of Peace Education is generally more global in perspective. Peace Education also "has a stronger emphasis on social justice orientations and larger systemic issues of violence than conflict education programs" (Jones, 2004). Candice Carter asserts that the foundation of peace education is learning to accept and understand differences, thereby fostering stronger communities. Hence, assessing the success of conflict resolution must account for the degree to which disputants learn to build and maintain their community, both during and after mediation, through understanding and accommodating their differences. In this article Carter focuses on the personal and social productivity of conflict resolution in the school setting. Her aim is to improve the processes and results of conflict resolution in schools.