



Leading the Journey

An E-newsletter on EXCELLENCE in Leadership

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Leadership for Change

Ed Boyatt

Why do Adventist administrators need a newsletter on leadership? I recently googled “leadership newsletter” and discovered dozens of them. I found only one Adventist leadership newsletter, and it comes from the Trans-European Division, which addresses needs in European schools. But why a newsletter specialized for Adventist educational leaders in the Pacific Union?

First, people in leadership positions need to be reminded of their mandate to lead. It may not come naturally to many in administrative positions. Studies indicate that the majority of administrators prefer managing over leading. I believe that Adventist educational institutions are over managed and under led. Administrators tend to manage what is. Leaders dream and plan what could be. Since the natural tendency is to spend time managing, this e-newsletter will address how school leaders can be effective as leaders and managers. It will also show how management functions can be reduced, thus giving more time to attend to leadership tasks. It is not a matter of working harder or longer; administrators already do that. It is a matter of working more effectively.

Another reason to publish this newsletter is that many find it difficult to read professional development journals and books during the school year on a regular basis. If an administrator could read something with executive summaries on a regular basis, that could assist him/her in keeping focus on the most important tasks of the position.

The Pacific Union leadership team has a dream to assist its school leaders in growing professionally in the Journey to Excellence. Monthly sections of this newsletter will be devoted to principles of leadership and boardmanship. It will also suggest practical resources that will inspire and inform leadership effectiveness.

I like to think of leadership as a process of making changes for the better. A leader is an expert in

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Point of Impact

Doug Herrmann

The role of instructional leader is arguably the most significant task of the principal, yet the one that most easily gets set aside. Instructional leadership includes supervision of instruction, teacher evaluations, planning for professional development and in-services, and hiring. All of these are important, but let’s consider supervision of instruction. Most simply, it means knowing what’s going on. There is no substitute for being in the classroom. A visit may be formal and last an hour or more. Or it may be an informal walk through that lasts five to ten minutes. You may even like to deliver messages to classrooms occasionally, a visit that may be measured more in seconds than minutes. Regardless of formality or length, regular visits are important. All of these interactions play a part in your knowing what’s going on.

It is easy to put off classroom visits. (I am writing this when I probably should be away from my desk and watching school happening on the front lines!) I have found that being accountable to another principal helps me to keep the priorities straight. At Loma Linda Academy, the principals established a spreadsheet through Google Docs that allows each principal to record the number of minutes per week that he visited classrooms. It can be created very easily and visible only to those invited to be included. Our initial goal has been a minimum of 100 minutes per week. All recorded times are visible to the others in the group. While most schools don’t have multiple principals, three or more principals in the conference could agree together to set up a shared document like this, encouraging each other to get out of their offices and into classrooms.

Teachers tell me that our visits are very important and appreciated. They feel supported. One told me, “I love it when you stop by. It helps me know that you know what I’m doing in my classroom, and it shows me that you care about the students and teachers on campus.” Another noted that “students love to see administrators in the classroom, and it is always great

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bringing a group together to work on common goals for improvement. A leader keeps the future foremost in his/her mind. The leader is never satisfied with the status quo. Leaders dream and plan for what should be. Leaders are optimistic about the future because they believe that they can make a difference in the people they serve and the structure they administer. And they often can foster change smoothly, one step at a time.

A leadership position does not qualify you as a leader. The principalship or superintendency gives you the opportunity to lead, but the position does not guarantee leadership. Trust in you as a leader is earned. You are a leader when you have gained the trust of your team and earned the respect of your colleagues.

Adventist churches and schools are waiting for their leaders to demonstrate passion and expertise in leadership. The task of a leader is to establish a team that seeks to transform a school into something better. Ellen White reminds us that “something better is the watchword of education, the law of all true living” (Education 296).

This “something better” is the quality that our schools should be known for. You have already prioritized some of the changes you wish to make in your school improvement plans as part of your accreditation process. Some have developed a strategic plan that outlines improvement goals for the next five years.

I dream of the day when Adventist schools are known as experts in differentiated teaching methods that include enrichment for the fast learner and remediation for the slower learner. I dream of the day when principals spend time each week in the classroom, serving as coaches and affirming the positive practices of their teachers. I wish that technology plans existed in each school to assist teachers and engage students. I envision a time when students and staffs are the most physically fit people in the community.

The goal of this e-newsletter is to inform and inspire school leaders to lead their schools in the “Journey to Excellence.” Students deserve it. Parents expect it. May this newsletter help Adventist leaders in this journey of changing for the better. ☪

to have your positive support and presence.” Finally, one e-mailed me this comment: “I can’t think of a better way for school leaders to have a sense of what is happening on the campus at the ‘point of impact.’”

Additionally, principals will be encouraged by seeing the wonderful things going on in classrooms, teachers will be pleased to know that you are in their rooms, students like seeing you out and about, and your discussions with parents will be based on first-hand knowledge. Whatever tool or method you use to encourage spending time in classrooms, use it. But make it simple so you won’t spend time at your desk; rather, be out there on the front lines – at the “point of impact”! ☪

“I can’t think of a better way for school leaders to have a sense of what is happening on the campus at the ‘point of impact.’”

A Praying Principal

Don Weatherall

When I was a principal, I began every morning with private prayer in my office. I arrived at my office 90 minutes before school started each day. I knelt at my desk and prayed for my staff, myself, my students and their parents. I prayed that the Lord would be present and that His blessing would be added to all that was done that day.

While in prayer, I would go through the halls in my mind and pray for each teacher as I visualized his/her classroom. I asked that the teachers would be successful in explaining their lessons that day, that they would be a good role models for their students, and the Holy Spirit and angels would be in their classrooms, leading in all that was done. I would then pray for each supporting staff member, that their witness would be felt throughout the campus.

I often reminded my staff that I was praying personally for each one every day and that I would be happy to pray with them when they asked. I found that as I faithfully continued this practice, fewer problems developed during the school day. I also found that as I prayed for the staff, I experienced better rapport with them. When staff members knew that I was praying for them, we thought more highly of each other. Indeed, a school culture centered in prayer sets the tone to affirm learning and foster relationships. ☪

Berit von Pohle

The school board is an important component of every school community. Working with the board takes a significant amount of time for the principal, and understanding the role of the board and the principal are essential for effective governance.

The board has four primary functions as it relates to the school:

- What – defining the vision and direction of the school
- How – providing resources and developing policies to provide direction for the board in supporting the administration and staff implementation of the vision
- How well – developing measurements to determine the level of success of various program aspects of the school
- Sell – advocating for Adventist education in general and the school in specific

The principal is the link between the board and the staff. This does not mean simply being a conduit for information. Instead, the principal must provide appropriate information and guidance to the board in order for the governing body to make the best decisions for the school. The principal must also fairly represent the board’s decisions to the staff in a way that will empower them to carry out the will of the board. ☪

Joining the Journey

Excellence in leadership is the journey. YOU can join by sending your contact information to: leadingthejourney@puconline.org. Let's make this journey together!