



# Leading the Journey

## An E-newsletter on EXCELLENCE in Leadership

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 4 • A PUBLICATION OF THE PACIFIC UNION CONFERENCE • December, 2012

### In this issue:

- Leading and Managing
- Because Someone Died
- Communicate
- Boardmanship



**Berit von Pohle**  
Director of Education  
Pacific Union Conference



**Ed Boyatt**  
Retired educator with 32  
years in administration

**Jim Roy**  
Professor of Education  
Pacific Union College

**David Gillam**  
Vice President for  
Education  
Central California  
Conference

Sign up to receive the newsletter: [leadingthejourney@puonline.org](mailto:leadingthejourney@puonline.org)  
OR visit <http://paucedu.adventistfaith.org/leading-the-journey>.

## Leading and Managing

*Ed Boyatt*

Is most of your work day as a principal filled with managing or leading? How you answer this question may change your priorities as a principal. Even though many administrators use managing and leading interchangeably, these two terms describe significantly different administrative tasks. Principals must recognize and employ both the tasks of managing and of leading.

Management has to do with stability and order. It is a principal's goal to keep things "running smoothly." That is why each day is overflowing with management tasks. Order and effectiveness are perceived when the reports are on time, when tuition is billed and collected on time, when parent concerns are professionally addressed, when student discipline is fair and redemptive, when the physical plant and grounds are attractive, when relationships with pastors are vibrant, when students are happy with their teachers, and when phone calls and emails are answered in a timely manner. All these tasks are important. If you perform them well, most of your board members and superintendent will be pleased. Your job is secure.

Leadership has to do with change and the future. Managers look to the bottom line; leaders look to the horizon. The first is short term; the next is long term. Leading takes planning and strategic thinking. Leading focuses on school-improvement goals and holds people accountable for change.

Effective principals must be competent in both managing and leading. Both are essential for operating a successful school. But most schools are over-managed and under-lead. Why is this? Why do administrators spend more time managing than leading? Management tasks are tangible, visible, and immediate. Leadership tasks can be postponed until tomorrow. Most would agree that shaping the school's future is important, but it is not urgent. Leadership is intentional. I want my teachers and students to be more successful; and here is my plan to improve what is most important.

Continued on page 2

## Because Someone Died

*Jim Roy*

Over the past eight months I have received cornea transplants in both of my eyes. My mother passed on a degenerative eye disease called Fuch's Dystrophy, which slowly clouds the cornea. I don't know much about the donors, only that one was a 41-year-old woman from Tennessee and that the other was a man in his upper 40s from the Chicago area. I pray for the families of these donors even though I have not met them, and I express my thanks for the unselfishness, even in death, of the donors themselves. Because of their deaths, I can see.

The most obvious lesson to draw from this story is that because Jesus died for us, we can "see" and experience life in new ways. In fact, because of His death we can live forever. The busyness of life, with its schedules and meetings and letters and traveling, can crush that awareness in us. Paul reminds us that there is nothing, not even our full schedules and complex jobs, that can separate us from God's love. However, we can ask the Holy Spirit to create an appreciation for what Jesus has done for us.

Another lesson from this story is that our success so often depends on the support and involvement of others. My eye success was dependent on the ultimate sacrifice of donors and on the skill of a surgeon. Your success as a superintendent or principal is dependent on others, too. Think about the people in your life who have supported your dreams and stood with you during your efforts to bring about change. Even as some may have complained or fought against your ideas, think of the people who gave you their green light and encouraged you to keep going.

Not a day goes by that I don't think about being able to see better because of the sacrifice and skill of others. I encourage you to reflect on ways in which people are supporting you, maybe even holding you up so that you can see farther and see more clearly. And on a practical note, remember to sign up to be a donor yourself. Because someone did just that, I can see. ☺

## Leading and Managing

Since leading is so critical to the school, the leader must carve out time for leadership. I suggest you make an hour appointment on the Monday morning calendar for assessing the “leading” activities for the week. This ensures that you keep focused on the most important priorities. You want to be mindful of what occupies your time and in choosing the important even if it is not urgent.

And what are these important things that keep getting postponed? Let me suggest two such activities: teacher supervision and strategic planning. Why is it that I didn’t observe a teacher teaching last week? Is it important? Yes, but it is not urgent. I will make it urgent this week. Affirming and nurturing my teachers is a leadership activity. My relationship with my teachers is the most important asset I have in my work as a principal. My goal is to have the best teachers for my students and parents. Therefore, I will spend time each week nurturing the professional awareness and growth of my teachers.

The second activity is strategic planning for the school of my dreams. I will talk about strategic planning in more detail in future columns, but let it be said now that I want to shape the future of my school. I have two or three school improvement goals this school year that I want to work on each week. Yes, I can postpone this work until tomorrow; but I want excellence, and excellence comes with hard work and resources. For example, if I want all my students to have laptop computers, then what am I doing this week to fulfill that dream.

Simple practicality demands that most of my day is spent in management tasks. But my challenge is to be more intentional in leadership activities that address the important goals that are not urgent. Which is more important, leading or managing? Both are important. Managing will keep most people happy, but leading will bring the quality that students deserve, parents expect and which God can richly bless. ☪

## Communicate

*David Gillam*

Communication is a key aspect of success. New and seasoned principals need to value keeping in touch with their staff and constituents. It is too easy for an administrator to hole up in her/his office and seek to manage by proxy or by edict. In reality, the principal that gets out of touch with his teachers, board, parents, pastors, students and parents is the principal that is limited in success.

While the professional kudos of staying in touch with your constituency is very rewarding, the price tag of communication can be very time consuming. How easy it is for the principal to arrive for the day, and find several hours of office work staring her in the face. To visit each classroom and reconnect with teachers, students, and parents can seem like a luxury that one can’t afford.

Actually, the opposite is true; the extra effort to make the school rounds on a consistent basis can be a true luxury, when done on a routine basis. The old saying, ‘when the cat’s away, the mice will play’ is all too true in leadership. The principal that is content with using edicts, emails, or even not communicating will soon be content with having his teachers and constituents ‘play’ in her absence.

The school family needs to have leadership. This can only come about by the principal keeping her soul and life close to the heartbeats of her school family. So, how is it going in your administrative world? When is the last time that you graced the classrooms in your school? When is the last time that you went to your students’ games? When is the last time that you asked a teacher about his classroom and family? When is the last time that you, as principal, took the time to send a personal birthday card to your teachers? I’m sure that you could come up with several questions like this. So, take the time and energy to stay in touch with your team and constituency. ☪

## Boardsmanship

*Berit von Pohle*

### “How” Part II, continued from last month

What kinds of policies do boards usually have? Boards often have policies on topics such as:

**Athletics:** GPA guidelines, frequency of practice, financial considerations

**Contracting of work on campus:** number of bids required, financial limit triggering bids

**Exam permits:** when are they required, what constitutes financial arrangement

**Field trips:** distances allowed, financial limitations, supervision requirements

**Financial approval:** up to what dollar amount can the principal make decisions about expenditures, up to what dollar amount can the finance committee approve, at what dollar amount does the board need to provide authorization

**Home School:** how is credit accepted from home school, can home school students participate on campus, can they take a limited number of classes

**Marketing Plan:** an annually updated and reviewed plan for the marketing of the school and recruitment of students

**Technology Plan:** an annually updated and reviewed plan outlining inclusion of technology in the curriculum, updating of equipment, professional development for teachers

An additional layer many boards employ is a dashboard for the monthly review of financial statements. Items on the dashboard might include a summary of how much money was received this month compared to what was expected; how much money was spent compared to what was expected; current status of accounts receivable reported as a percentage of tuition billed; a summary of the aging of accounts receivable; a summary of the aging of accounts payable. A one page summary of financial highlights can provide good information to all board members, even those without a financial background.

As boards function with the “how” it is important that board committees function with the confidence of the full board. Boards must find the balance between hearing enough about what the committees processed without re-visiting the full issue again once a recommendation is made to the board.

Figuring how to do the “how” is an important function of every school board. ☪