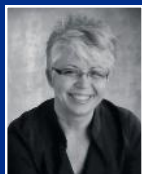




LEADING THE JOURNEY

An E-newsletter on *EXCELLENCE in Leadership*

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Management: Faculty/ Staff Meetings

Leadership, NAD Principals' Handbook (excerpt)

Faculty meetings provide time for the faculty/staff to engage in professional development, evaluate student learning results, review spiritual and academic action plans, coordinate upcoming events, and discuss other important issues. Some things to remember for effective faculty meetings are:

- Hold no more meetings than necessary.
 - Avoid top-down meetings whenever possible—facilitate participation.
 - Distribute agendas in advance and provide a process for adding items.
 - Use meetings to address school-wide issues.
 - Encourage idea sharing between departments and grade levels.
 - Summarize discussions and actions, and distribute minutes.
 - End on a positive note.
- Have regularly scheduled meetings that start and end on time.

JOIN the JOURNEY

Email: Leadingthejourney@puconline.org
Visit: <http://paucedu.adventistfaith.org/leading-the-journey>

Paddling Together

Lisa Clarke, Curriculum Coordinator

Seventh-day Adventist Church, British Columbia Conference

If all you use your staff meeting for is to impart information, you are missing an important tool to improve your school. Yes, you heard me correctly. Your monthly staff meetings are more than a quick meeting to inform teachers about the upcoming hot lunch, special event or change in schedule. That type of information can easily be disseminated by handout or email. Instead, I challenge you to view your meetings as opportunities to facilitate collaboration and positive relationships among your faculty and staff.

Collaboration improves education. It works just as well for faculty and staff as it does for students. Imagine a rowboat where the two people with the oars rowed in opposite directions. The only result of rowing in two directions is the boat going in circles. In order to move forward, all rowers must be working together to row in the same direction. If your faculty and staff are not collaborating, your school is going in circles. Now imagine the results if everyone paddled in the same direction.

Within the Adventist Education system, we are faced with constantly having to improve our programming to compete with other public and Christian schools. Faculty and staff meetings allow opportunities to improve the school. By meeting as a group and discussing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis), everyone is empowered to strengthen the school. In addition, by allowing faculty and staff to be part of the process, you, as the leader, are able to help foster the support needed to ensure success of any strategic plans. The faculty and staff meetings also provide time to revisit, revise, and adapt the strategic plans and SWOT analysis as needed.

Faculty and staff meetings also provide an opportunity to link together

Staff Meeting—A Democratic Model

Juanita Neal Teranski, M.A.T

Retired Educator, Walla Walla, WA

Principaling is not for sissies! It takes courage, skill, and perseverance to lead a group of professional, goal-oriented teachers! The new principal must act quickly to establish leadership, while at the same time develop an atmosphere of trust, acceptance, and collegiality. I have found that one of the ways to facilitate this process is to conduct a good staff meeting – one in which vision, responsibility, and leadership are shared.

The following democratic model is one I have used with success in a variety of settings – staff meetings, departmental meetings, and committee meetings. I believe it has merit in terms of sharing the vision, sharing the responsibility, and developing leadership. Here are the basics:

1. Have a set time and place for regular staff meetings. Don't allow interruptions to invade this important forum. Stick to the agenda and allotted time.
2. Have a shared agenda; ask for input. One week before staff meeting put a note in staff mailboxes, asking for agenda items. The *principal* then sets the agenda, incorporating this input as appropriate.
3. Have three operatives for each meeting: *chairperson*, *recorder*, and *housekeeper*.
 - a. The *chairperson* keeps the meeting on track, sticking to the agenda, regulating time, and conducting business as per Robert's Rules of Order. (The principal should be the first to fill this position, modeling the role.)
 - b. The *recorder* takes minutes and records who is

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individuals who have common interests and abilities. As principal, offer opportunities for your faculty and staff to assume leadership roles in the school. Leadership opportunities could involve enlisting those with musical gifts to help plan and perform for your area churches or asking the staff members who love drama to coordinate the annual Christmas play. By sharing the responsibility and allowing the time and resources needed, you would be allowing your faculty and staff the opportunity to improve the school program, while developing their leadership abilities.

Finally, time should be given in your meetings to facilitate positive relationships among your faculty and staff. Allow some of your meeting time to encourage collaboration by giving your faculty and staff time to discuss both personal and professional strategies and challenges. Encourage them to share with each other their personal growth plans and allow follow-up time for reflection and sharing the progress toward their goals. This sharing time also encourages the faculty and staff to hold each other accountable for their personal and professional growth.

As you begin this school year, take a new look at your faculty and staff meetings. Save your communications for email and use the time to encourage your faculty and staff to row together toward excellence in Adventist education.

Staff Meeting—A Democratic Model

responsible for follow-up action. Before distributing copies, he/she highlights copies as per each person's individual responsibility. "Follow-Up" will be an item on the next agenda. Reports will be given.

- c. The *housekeeper* records good ideas which come up during the meeting, but for which there is no present time. After the meeting, the housekeeper will turn in these ideas to the principal. They will appear on the next agenda as "Housekeeping Items." Going forward, this creates an idea pool from which future agenda/discussion items may be chosen.

An important part of this democratic model is this. The positions of *chairperson*, *recorder*, and *housekeeper* are filled by *all* staff members during the school year on a *rotating basis*. For example, several times during the school year each staff member will alternately serve as chairperson, recorder, and housekeeper. (Despite protests!) Therefore, not only does each staff member share in the responsibilities of developing the agenda and facilitating the meeting, but also, he/she has the opportunity of developing personal leadership skills.

Upon reflection, we can see that Jesus also used a democratic model. He didn't call us servants, but friends. He developed collegiality with His disciples, freely sharing His vision and entertaining their input. In addition, He gave us *all* the responsibility of sharing this vision, sending us into all the world. What tremendous leadership opportunities this concept has created within His church! Soon He will exclaim to His friends, "Enter into the joy of your Lord!"

Principals, be courageous! Share the vision; share the responsibility; and develop leaders to the glory of God! Best wishes for a great school year!

The Quiet Power of a Co-leader

Author's Name Withheld

Like the idealized shepherd-kings of Israel, she was tending her flocks of energetic students. As a full-time classroom teacher, she showed no aspirations to leadership, though she carried the title of vice-principal. She was a great follower. I was the new principal who was still learning the local culture and working on my own growth in leadership. In our early days together, she seldom offered advice or volunteered for additional duties. She simply did her job... well.

Then came a tense meeting with a parent. We met off campus, and I had considered the student's issues, outlined what the parent needed to hear, and explored my negotiating boundaries. I was braced and ready for rough sailing. But during the meeting, this godly vice-principal took the lead, speaking gently and empathically. Despite her obvious compassion, she asked the difficult and probing questions that clarified the situation for us all. I cringed at her directness, but I saw the anxious and distrustful parent open up. She calmed, listened, and then offered honest, self-revealing answers. It was like watching a flower bloom, and I knew that this teacher had much to teach me.

A close working relationship developed, and I asked her to do any task I felt she could do better than I. I learned not to ask for her advice; her inclinations were insightful enough. I learned, in short, to follow.

Our faculty meetings ran better as I asked her to take the lead on select agenda items, especially those involving curriculum. She had her colleagues' respect as an excellent instructor. I also learned to call for her thoughts when some discussions became dicey. Sometimes her thoughts refocused us, other times she was also uncertain. But as she temporarily took the floor, I had time to rethink our approach. Meetings became fun with plenty of space and grace for creative thought.

Some principals envision themselves as the "captain at the helm." They see their hand on the wheel while their eye is on the horizon. However, I believe that most great schools are guided by the one who guides the captain. To paraphrase Solomon, "A co-leader of noble character, who can find?" Proverbs 31:10.

In that environment of trust and mutual respect we learned together to be transparent, to do well the tasks at hand, and to trust the Lord with the "what ifs" of tomorrow. Few things are more empowering for the leader than to have an intelligent, team-spirited, godly co-leader. It is worth every investment of time and money to identify and empower such a person.

One summer I asked her to take the helm while I attended to a personal project. She oversaw facility improvements, new student interviews, and the finishing of our safety plan. I gave her my paychecks. It was money well spent, and she told me with surprise, "I actually liked that work."

Three years later, when I left that school she was the natural choice for principal, embraced by teachers, board, and community. She would still rather be tending her own little flock, but she continues to follow as the Lord leads.