



# LEADING THE JOURNEY

An E-newsletter on *EXCELLENCE* in Leadership

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## Instructional Leadership

Leadership, *NAD Principals' Handbook* (excerpt)

The primary function of a principal is to ensure that students achieve. Research (Gallup) indicates that the fastest way to make a difference in student achievement is to change the principal of the school. Effective principals engage in work that supports teachers in improving their instructional practices. This type of support occurs in classrooms, not the principal's office. Effective principals are instructional leaders because they make a commitment to learning, and they connect the work of

improved student learning and teaching by building strong teams of teachers.

While some aspects of instructional leadership may be delegated, it is the principal who makes the difference in the quality of the teaching and learning process. Instructional leadership includes several components:

- Supervision of instruction
- Professional development
- Teacher evaluation

<http://adventisteducation.org/principals-handbook/>

## The Effective Instructional Leader

*Angie Ward, Principal, Parkview Adventist Academy*

Leadership is an endless study. According to Tannenbaum, Weschler, and Massarik (1961), the definition of leadership is the interpersonal influence directed through the communication process toward the attainment of some goal or goals. Although this concept works well for the business world, the educational sphere is quite different. There are no profit margins, success can look completely different from one invested individual to the next, and there are a variety of different stakeholders. Thomas Sergiovanni (1985) identified five forces that impact instructional leadership: technical, human, educational, symbolic, and cultural. The last three forces are unique to school leadership. Many effective principals have learned to address these dimensions through mentorship, advanced studies, and some through experience. According to Elaine K. McEwan (1998), an award winning principal, there are seven steps that principals need to consider to be an effective Instructional Leader.

1. **Establish and implement your instructional goals.** Although this is an overwhelming assignment with so many public agendas that are vying for attention, knowing the "road map" for students will guide instructional leadership. Establish the essential and most critical outcomes for students at your school by involving all teachers in this process.
2. **Be there for your staff.** Be a listening ear, have the door open for brainstorming sessions, support new ideas, and provide resources to empower staff. When principals are involved through hallway chats, structured meetings, or an inquiring e-mail, there is a stronger working team and less judgment.

3. **Create a learning-oriented school culture and climate.** This takes place through habits and consistency. Instructional Leaders need to provide strategies and consistency to create a culture of learning.
4. **Communicate your school's vision and mission to staff and students.** Parent-teacher conferences, newsletters, social events, staff worships, assemblies, informal conversations, student council provide opportunities to dialogue and model the vision and mission. Two-way communication needs to be part of the culture of the school.
5. **Set high expectations for your staff.** When the principal provides assistance in a teacher's professional development and keeps the focus on attainment of these goals and utilizes resources to support a teacher, the students ultimately benefit.
6. **Develop teacher leaders.** Some teachers are able to be mentors or coaches to new teachers, some are willing to pilot new programs and teach others, some teachers are great problem solvers and decision makers make it safe to risk and grow through making each role important to the team.
7. **Maintain a positive attitude toward students, staff, and parents.** Instructional leaders are willing to be involved in effective resolutions and problem-solving between all involved in the school. These principals encourage open communication and facilitate opportunities for positive interaction. ☺

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# Administrators as Instructional Leaders

*Renee John, Principal*

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There are different styles of leadership approaches used by administrators in schools. According to Sherman and MacDonald (2007), instructional leadership is the key role for school administrators to advance in their relationships with teachers. Principals analyze the way they encourage teachers about teaching and assessment approaches with students. According to Leithwood & Prestine (2002), school administrators can contribute indirectly to improved student outcomes. Instructional leadership focuses on the relationship that exists between the administrator, teachers, and student, and how to support teachers in content areas.

Administrators provide support to teachers through a variety of ways such as professional development, situated knowledge, increased resource support, model teaching, additional planning time, staff meeting and collaboration time (Sherman and MacDonald, 2007). The administrator makes effort for collaboration practices to be a natural part of the daily activities at school, modeling flexible and diverse teaching methods (Sahin, 2011). A commitment to support teachers from principals can lead to teachers directly impacting the success of the students (Eury & Snyder, 2011). The principal takes a key role in

developing opportunities for professional development and collaboration to take place. Some suggestions on how to collaborate includes the following by Eury, Synder and et al (2011): principals should allow teachers to learn from each other and that might entail hiring substitute teachers throughout the day to make collaboration time possible. Another suggestion is having duty-free lunch periods where teachers can collaborate. These opportunities provided by administrators to collaborate enhance the performance of their school and its teachers.

Trust is an intricate part of being an instructional leader. Without trust, the relationship between administrator and teacher will flounder, and people may be confined to cliques or special interest group. To build trust it is necessary for administrators, teachers and students to be aware of the school culture, and for the administrator to be a role model in the school (Sahin, 2011).

What happens when the principal lacks knowledge in specific content? School administrators can use their relationships with other teachers or within the school district to gain knowledge in the areas that they might need support (Sheman and MacDonald, 2007).

Being an instructional leader entails being knowledgeable about the content areas and supporting teachers through collaboration, planning, modeling desired behavior, and building trust amongst administrators, teachers and students. ☺

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## Frequently Asked Questions

What criteria should be used to evaluate teachers?

What is the first step in the development of an evaluation plan for a school or district?

Can a conference legally support the inclusion of performance standards with spiritual elements?

What are the aspects or phases that should be included in any teacher evaluation process?

What information about the evaluation process should be shared with the entire faculty?

Should teachers be involved in planning for their own evaluation?

Is it OK to let teachers evaluate themselves?

Do all teachers have to be evaluated the same way regardless of their abilities and experiences?

What about teacher portfolios and teacher evaluation?

What procedures must I be concerned about when dealing with an ineffective teacher?

What kind of information or data is used to evaluate teachers?

How do I write or document concerns about a teacher's professional performance?

What kinds of evaluation documents or information about a teacher should be kept on file?

If I have concerns about a teacher's performance, what do I do first?

How important are classroom observations in the evaluation process?

What is the role of informal classroom observations in the evaluation process?

What is a formal classroom observation?

**For more helpful questions, see the Supervision and Evaluation of Instructional Personnel: [https://paucedu.adventistfaith.org/uploaded\\_assets/448897](https://paucedu.adventistfaith.org/uploaded_assets/448897).**