



LEADING *the* JOURNEY

An E-newsletter on *EXCELLENCE in Leadership*

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THE JOYS OF THE PRINCIPALSHIP

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“A knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education and of all true SERVICE.”
– EG White,
Ministry of Healing p. 409.

[NAD Principals' Handbook](#)

“There are no posts of honor but only of SERVICE.”
– W.A. Spicer, GC President 1922-1930

Being a Seventh-day Adventist school principal is an awesome opportunity and responsibility to serve God, change lives, and further the mission of the world church. Although there are many things that are asked of school principals that can seem overwhelming at times, ultimately, it is a position that can strengthen an individual's personal walk with Christ while being incredibly professionally rewarding. Those who assume this role and responsibility are to be affirmed for their commitment and dedication to such a worthy cause.

There are few other positions in the Seventh-day Adventist Church that allow an individual to have such a wide-ranging impact as that of school principal. From the influence a principal has on the individual students, faculty, and staff of a given school to the broader impact a vibrant school can have on the greater community, the

importance of the role a principal plays as the leader of a school cannot be overstated or underestimated. It is a position that must be approached prayerfully, purposefully, and with continually renewed commitment to excellence.

Much is asked of Seventh-day Adventist principals. To some extent they are expected to be a school's curricular expert, facilities manager, mental health therapist, chief financial officer, records keeper, community liaison, spiritual leader, and educational visionary. The *Principals' Handbook* is intended to be a helpful resource for those who have answered the call to mission as a Seventh-day Adventist principal. It offers suggestive guidance and support on some of the critical issues that a principal will eventually encounter in the position. ☪

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JOYS OF ADMINISTRATION

James Davis, Principal, Battle Creek Academy

If you are like me, it is very difficult to plan your day. My average day seems to be a series of interruptions. It is not uncommon to be needed in two different parts of the building at the same time. To have someone stop by and need to talk while trying to finish last minute reports for the Union or Conference. To open an irate email or

take a phone call from a yelling parent. It is completely understandable that there is a shortage of administrators and that so few stay in any position for very long. Yet, despite these negative aspects, there can be great joy in administration. It is vital that we take time to reflect on and to cherish the joys of administration.

There is joy in seeing others succeed. It is a great feeling to see a difficult student make great strides and become a leader on campus. To steer

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a new teacher and watch as they gain confidence, develop their classroom management skills, and become quality teachers.

It is very rewarding to facilitate healing in broken situations. There is joy to be had in taking the phone call from a yelling parent, hearing them out, resolving the situation, and ending the call with prayer. There is great fulfillment in mediating disagreements between staff members, teachers and students, and helping them to find resolution.

At the end of the day, the greatest joy is to know that you

are being used by God to further His work. There are a lot of things that we could do that would be less stressful and pay more. But, if God has called you to administration, the greatest joy is following His call and letting Him use you to impact those we are called to lead. As John the Baptist said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:30 KJV) **Putting self aside and letting Christ use us to grow His kingdom is very humbling and extremely rewarding. This is the joy of administration.** ☩

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NOT JUST A TASK

*Burney Culpepper, Principal
Mount Pisgah Academy*

During a trip from Colorado, I was driving through Missouri thinking about the task of being a principal. **I have often asked myself what is it that ever convinced me that being a principal was smart or even pertinent to my future happiness.** Often, I focus on the trials, and there are plenty to go around, that seem to plague the life of a principal. I could write about the irate parents who sit in my office and vent their frustrations at any number of issues they deem important. We could discuss the students who do not seem to understand the importance of education to their future success. We could talk about the heartbreak that staff feel at the choices our students invariably make. The broken homes, sickness, and pain that dictate how our students relate to the church and the school. **This is when our loving God takes time to come and patiently remind**

me of the real reason we serve.

He reminds me of the teenage student who connects with a local child on the school mission trip. I remember the tears shed between the two as they said goodbye. Life changing impact. There are the days of high stress when I walk into my office and find handmade cards taking up every space on my desk. Or the times that students crowd around me vying for the opportunity to tell the stories of their day. Life changing interactions. I am shown the plans that were implemented through cooperation of the staff and parents. There are tears in the eyes of the parent as we talk about the impact to their child. Life changing relationships.

A task? No, I have been gently reminded of our calling to **build relationships that will ultimately end in changing the lives of those to whom we minister.** ☩

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MY CALLING

*Joel Bennett, Principal
Cicero Adventist Elementary School*

I was never going to be an administrator; however, it is interesting to reflect on the invitation of God to that leadership role.

I saw God for myself as a freshman in academy. As a 16-year-old, **I was blown away by the reality that God was in direct contact with me!** This amazing God was no longer the God of my parents, pastor, pathfinder leaders, or my teachers. He made His presence known in group prayer times. He revealed His presence during Bible studies that I was trained to lead. He showed up in my heart when I had believed, yet, before I had tasted that the Lord was good. How sweet that experience continues to be! How amazing that the Sustainer of the Universe would make His home in me! He made it possible to follow Him!

Six years later, I noticed the deep, powerful, transformative calling of Seventh-day Adventist Christian Education. While wrestling with the question, "How do we increase the probability our students will be rooted in the transformative power of direct contact with Jesus Christ?" I was aware that He was again transforming lives. Trevor, Zoe, Maya, Gavin, Elise, Lauren, Greg, Mitchel, and many more affirm my belief that Jesus has called me to school leadership to pursue His presence. What a blessing to focus discussions with colleagues, parents, and students around the high goal of reflecting the Creator through transformation. What a gift to reevaluate our hearts through staff and school board prayer! As a building leader **I find the greatest joy building a team that strives toward making the reality of the transformative power of direct contact with Jesus a regular, sustained opportunity for all of the students we minister to.** Thank You, Jesus, for Your resurrection power and the amazing gift to partner with You! ☩

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