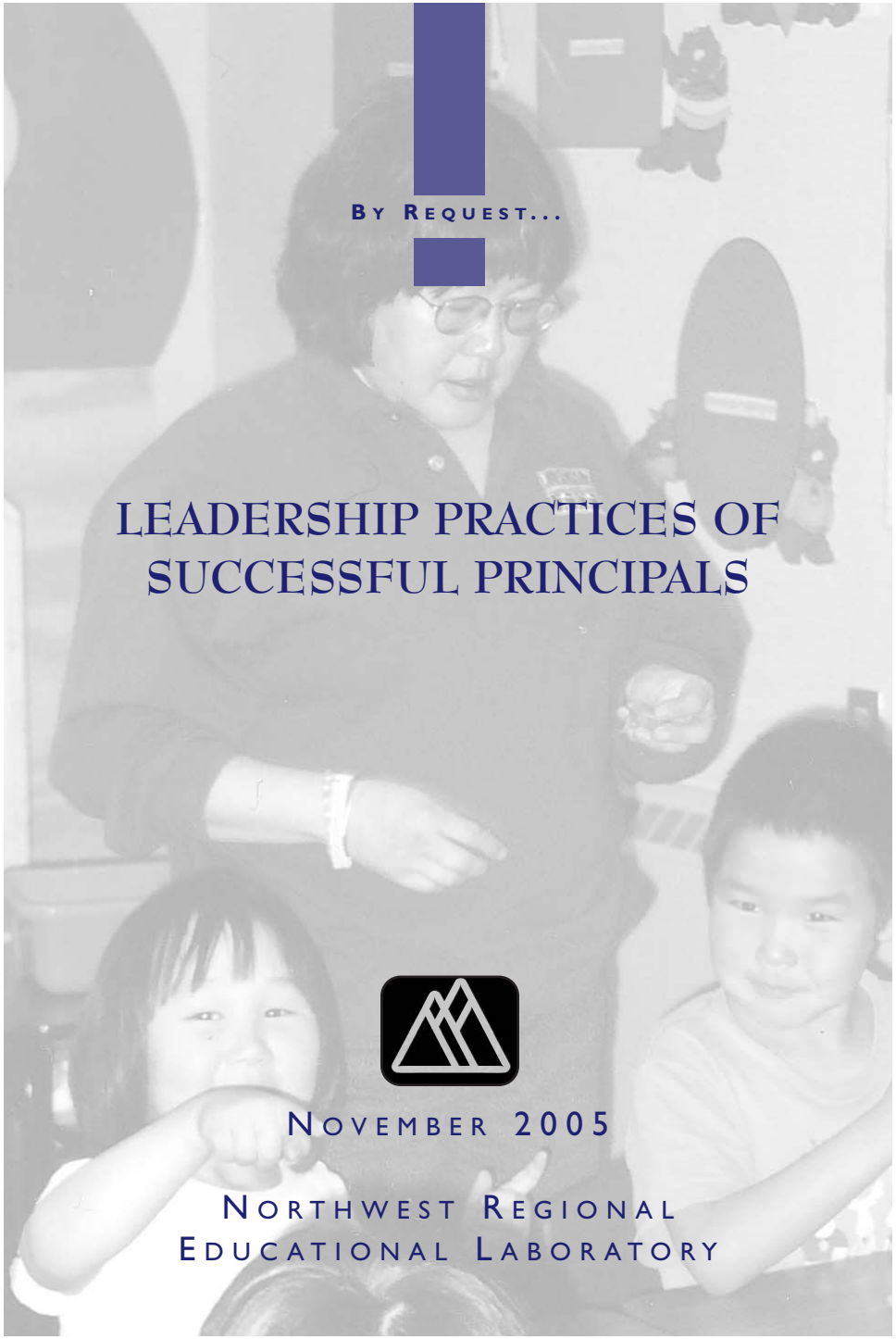

BY REQUEST...

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF SUCCESSFUL PRINCIPALS

NOVEMBER 2005

NORTHWEST REGIONAL
EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY

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- Culturally Responsive Practices for Student Success: A Regional Sampler

BY REQUEST...

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF SUCCESSFUL PRINCIPALS

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November 2005

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
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PREFACE

This booklet is one in a series of "hot topics" reports produced twice a year by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. These reports briefly address current educational concerns and issues as indicated by requests for information that come to the Laboratory from the Northwest region and beyond. Each booklet contains a discussion of research and literature pertinent to the issue, a sampling of how Northwest schools are addressing the issue, selected resources, and contact information.

The By Request series is intended as the "first line" of intervention—used for widespread initial diffusion of information. It is not intended to change practice in and of itself, but rather to spark interest among readers who can then take the next step of examining changes in practice. One objective of the series is to foster a sense of community and connection among educators. Another is to increase awareness of current education-related themes and concerns. Each booklet will give practitioners a glimpse of how fellow educators are addressing issues, overcoming obstacles, and attaining success in certain areas. The goal of the series is to give educators current, reliable, and useful information on topics that are important to them.

The purpose of this issue of By Request is to provide K–12 principals an introduction to leadership practices that can effect change in their schools. The booklet focuses on concrete strategies for novice principals and principals in schools in need of improvement. The research upon which the publication is based was screened carefully for both quality and relevance, with the majority of information

drawn from rigorous, scientifically based studies, and meta-analyses and research syntheses of such studies. Information drawn from practitioner sources is identified as such throughout the booklet.

The booklet was reviewed at the draft stage by internal and external reviewers. The external reviewers listed in the Acknowledgments section met criteria for technical, content, and practitioner reviewers. If you wish to provide feedback, please visit our Web site at www.nwrel.org/request/response.html to log your comments.

INTRODUCTION

Principals play a critical role in school improvement (Cotton, 2003; Sebring & Bryk, 2000). In fact, as Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom's recent analysis of the research (2004) confirms, "Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school." Principals' effects on student performance tend to be largest, moreover, "where and when they are needed most.... Indeed, there are virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader" (p. 3).

And yet, school leaders in the Northwest continue to report that too little of their time is spent on teaching and learning, the "core technologies" of their schools. According to the 1999–2000 federal Schools and Staffing Survey, principals in Northwest schools are much more likely to spend time every day "maintaining physical security" and "managing school facilities" (80 percent of principals surveyed) than they are to devote time on a daily basis to "guiding the development of curriculum" (20 percent), "facilitating achievement of the school mission" (36 percent), or "facilitating student learning" (47 percent). Despite widespread agreement that "instructional leadership" is a key ingredient of successful schools, less than 10 percent of Northwest teachers agree strongly that their principals talk with them frequently about their instructional practices; 34 percent agree somewhat, and more than half disagree either strongly or to some extent (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2003).

Though much has been written on the challenges principals face in juggling so many different roles, few publications

have focused specifically on local principals and the processes they have undertaken to effect change—both within themselves and their school communities. This booklet seeks to fill in some of these gaps, by providing an introduction to leadership practices that affect student achievement. At the heart of the booklet are profiles of five Northwest principals who are leading their schools to make significant, sustained improvement in student achievement. They share their experiences, reflect on leadership challenges they have overcome, and discuss the keys to their success. We follow these profiles with summaries of recent research that offer additional strategies for principals to strengthen leadership skills. We close with a few final suggestions for teachers, superintendents, school board members, and others in the school community who play key roles in supporting principals, particularly in the struggling schools that need them most.

IN CONTEXT: PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP UNDER NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

Schools have always needed strong principals. But in recent years, expectations of "strong" leaders have changed significantly, as has the level of attention focused on which principals are and are not meeting them. As Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) point out, "the role of principal [in U.S. schools] has swelled to include a staggering array of professional tasks and competencies" (p. 4):

> Principals are expected to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations/communications experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programs administrators, as well as guardians of various legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives. In addition, principals are expected to serve the often conflicting needs and interests of many stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, district office officials, unions, state and federal agencies. (p. 4)

With the passage of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), many of these new roles have been written into law. Under Title II, principals are now mandated to serve first and foremost as "instructional leaders" in their schools, educational coaches who possess the "skills necessary to help teachers teach" and "help students meet challenging State student academic achievement standards" (Title II, Section 2113 (c) cited in Lockwood, 2005).

At the same time, new formulas for calculating adequate yearly progress (AYP) under No Child Left Behind have raised the stakes for many principals, narrowing the criteria for success and shining light on leadership areas that may have been less closely monitored in the past. Unlike earlier versions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in which a school's performance was measured according to student scores overall, NCLB requires that schools also report results separately for several traditionally disadvantaged and/or underserved "subgroups" of the student population. As Anderson (2004) notes, "AYP requirements [under NCLB] are satisfied when the school as a whole and each individual subgroup within the school meet or exceed the statewide goals, with an average of 95 percent of the students completing the assessments" (p. 3).

Principals whose schools do not meet AYP requirements can now be held directly accountable under the law. Under Title I, principals whose students do not perform as required are subject to a series of increasingly greater sanctions, from diminished control over school management, to dismissal, to dissolution of the entire school. Stepped-up requirements for parental notification under NCLB have increased public scrutiny of principal performance in many low-performing schools as well, increasing the pressure from school boards, community leaders, and parents to produce results fast.

Perhaps the central challenge school leaders face today, as Elmore (2000) notes, is communicating a "sense of urgency and support" to their staff members "around issues of standards and accountability" (p. 33). Principals who approach the heightened expectations of NCLB as an opportunity to focus more time and attention on galvanizing staff members around school improvement will be several steps ahead of the game.

INSTRUCTIONAL, TRANSFORMATIONAL, AND BALANCED LEADERSHIP

In *Educational Leadership* (2005), Leithwood describes two models of leadership that "currently vie for most of the attention among practicing educators—instructional and transformational models" (p. 7).

Instructional Leadership Model

The instructional leadership model attempts to draw principals' attention back to teaching and learning, and away from the administrative and managerial tasks that continue to consume most principals' time. This model includes three main categories of practice:

1. Defining the school's mission
2. Managing the instructional program
3. Promoting a positive school learning climate

Practices related to defining the school's mission include overseeing the development of specific school goals and ensuring they are communicated clearly to all members of the school community. The practices central to managing the instructional program are "supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum, and monitoring student progress" (p. 8). At the heart of this model, however, is the final category of practice, promoting a positive school learning climate, which includes "protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, and providing incentives for learning" (pp. 8–9).

Though the term instructional leadership is used in No Child Left Behind, it is not explicitly defined and may have been informed as well by the literature on transformational leadership, another model that has gained much traction in the educational community in recent years.

Transformational Leadership Model

The transformational leadership model also places strong emphasis on mission building and instructional practice. The main difference between the two models has to do with developing the capacities of others: building staff members' commitment to the organization, cultivating new leaders, and nurturing a climate of continuous learning, reflection, and growth. "All transformational approaches to leadership," as Leithwood notes, "share in common the fundamental aim of fostering capacity development and higher levels of personal commitment to organizational goals on the part of leaders' colleagues" (p. 10). Again, the model includes three broad categories of practice:

1. Setting directions
2. Developing people
3. Redesigning the organization

As in the instructional leadership model, principal practices under setting directions include "building school vision, developing specific goals and priorities, and holding high performance expectations" (Leithwood, p. 10). Developing people emphasizes a principal's role in "providing intellectual stimulation, offering individualized support, and modeling desirable professional practices and values" (p. 10). The final category, redesigning the organization, includes "developing a collaborative school culture, creating structures to foster participation in school decisions, and creating productive community relationships" (p. 10). Redesigning the organization also includes reviewing and refining administrative processes to ensure that policies and processes consistently "reinforce and institutionalize rather than hinder" school improvement (p. 13).

Balanced Leadership Framework

The "balanced leadership framework" (Waters, Marzano, and McNulty, 2003) is based on results of a recent meta-analysis of the 70 most rigorous studies that examine the effects of principal leadership on student achievement. The meta-analysis identified 21 essential leadership responsibilities and 66 associated practices that have a statistically significant effect on student achievement. These responsibilities fall under Leithwood's broad categories of setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization. (See Appendix A for the list of 21 essential leadership responsibilities.)

An underlying concept of the balanced leadership framework is that it is not simply enough to know what to do, but principals need to know why, how, and when to do things. Effective principals need to know how to balance pushing for change with keeping structures or practices in place that have worked. They know "when, how, and why to create learning environments that support people, connect them with one another, and provide the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to succeed" (Waters, et al., p.2).

Principals also need to know what level of change they are leading to determine what leadership practices will be most

appropriate and effective. Waters and colleagues use the terms "first order" and "second order" to distinguish between the magnitudes of change. "First order" change is consistent with current norms and values, adjustments to the existing structure, built on established programs, and implemented with existing knowledge and skills. It is an extension of what has already been done. "Second order" change on the other hand, is a break with the past, a change from the way of doing things, and requires new knowledge and skills to implement. For example, one of the 21 responsibilities is "Input: the extent to which the principal involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies." For first order change, all that may be necessary is providing opportunities for teachers to provide input. But for second order change it would be necessary to involve staff in developing policies and leadership teams.

For a more complete discussion of the 21 responsibilities see Waters, Marzano, and McNulty's *Balanced Leadership: What Thirty Years of Research Tells Us About the Effect of Leadership on Student Achievement* (2003). To understand how to put the Balanced Leadership framework into practice, see Marzano, Waters, and McNulty's *School Leadership That Works: From Research to Results* (2005).

NORTHWEST SAMPLER

Given these broad themes of leadership—setting directions, redesigning the organization, developing people, and promoting a positive school climate—we asked five regional principals to describe the specific practices that led to gains in their students' achievement. We wanted to know not just what worked, but why they made the changes they did, and how they knew when to make changes. Because an important part of leadership is "developing people" we asked the principals how they support their staff members, build their leadership skills, and build relationships with family members.

To obtain a variety of perspectives across our region, we interviewed elementary, middle, and high school principals from Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. The schools are rural and urban with culturally and socioeconomically diverse student groups. We provide a brief introduction to the principals, their schools, and contact information before summarizing their answers to several important questions.

Kodiak Middle School (Grades 7–8)

722 Mill Bay Road
Kodiak, AK 99615
907-486-9213
Porfiria Lopez-Trout, principal
plopez-trout@kodiak.k12.ak.us

Porfiria Lopez-Trout began her career as a teacher and then school counselor in south Texas. She obtained her administrative license and moved to Kodiak, Alaska, where she served as physical education teacher, counselor, and assistant principal before becoming principal of Kodiak Middle School. The school reflects a broad range of cultural and linguistic diversity, with approximately 30 language groups represented. More than 20 percent of the 373 students are Asian American, and 17 percent are Alaska Native. Since Lopez-Trout became principal three years ago, Kodiak students as a whole made significant gains in language arts, especially English language learners and low-income students. Scores for ELL students increased 30 percent from 2003–2004 to 2004–2005.

William Thomas Middle School (Grades 6–8)

355 Bannock Avenue
American Falls, ID 83211
288-226-5203
Randy Jensen, principal
randyj@sd381.k12.id.us

Randy Jensen has been principal at William Thomas Middle School for nearly 16 years. In 2005, Jensen was recognized as the National Middle Level Principal of the Year. The school is in a rural area, with 68 percent of students eligible for the free and reduced-price lunch program. Forty percent of students are Hispanic. Students have progressed in language arts and mathematics, especially English language learners. In 2004–2005, eight percent more ELL students tested as proficient in language arts, and 10 percent more tested as proficient in mathematics than in the previous year.

Longfellow Elementary School (PK–5)

1100 6th Avenue South
Great Falls, MT 59405
406-268-2645
Cal Gilbert, principal
cal_gilbert@gfps.k12.mt.us

Cal Gilbert is a member of the Chippewa/Cree tribe of the Rocky Boy reservation. As a child he attended Longfellow Elementary and later taught there as a fifth-grade teacher. Before becoming principal, he was the Director of Indian Education for the district. With 91 percent of students on free and reduced-price lunch and 56 percent Native American students, Longfellow has achieved AYP for the last four years and shows steady growth on reading and mathematics. In 2001, 58 percent of students were proficient in mathematics, and in 2004, 67 percent were proficient.

Hosford Middle School (Grades 6–8)

2303 S.E. 23rd Place
Portland, OR 97214
503-916-5640
Melissa Sandven, principal
msandven@pps.k12.or.us

Melissa Sandven is beginning her second year as principal. Previously she was assistant principal at a Portland area high school, and taught social studies and Spanish for eight years. Hosford Middle School is in a socioeconomic and culturally diverse neighborhood, with 56 percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. The school has made significant gains in achievement scores, and was recognized in 2005 by the Oregon Superintendent of Public Instruction for having the most overall achievement for a middle school with a significant percentage of low-income and minority students. The number of eighth-graders meeting the state mathematics benchmark doubled in the last four years. Twenty-one percent more ELL students met mathematics standards in 2004–2005 than in the previous year. Students with disabilities also improved significantly in language arts.

Grandview High School (Grades 9–12)

1601 W. 5th Street
Grandview, WA 98930
509-882-8750
Arcella Hall, principal
AHall@grandview.wednet.edu

Arcella Hall has had a long career as a principal. She was principal of Port Townsend High School for several years before coming to Grandview where she has been principal for four years. Located in the rural Yakima Valley, Grandview's 768 students are 76 percent Hispanic and 66 percent are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. Grandview High School's overall achievement scores have been increasing as well as Hispanic students' scores. Reading scores have increased 40 percent from 1999 to 2005— from 28.5 percent of students meeting standards to 68.6 percent. Writing scores have increased 41 percent in the same period—from 19.5 percent of students meeting standards to 61 percent in 2005 meeting standards.

1. Your school has made tremendous strides in improving student achievement. To what do you attribute this success?

"Increasing reading achievement of all our students, especially English language learners is a high priority," says **Arcella Hall**. Before she became principal, a daily **two-hour block schedule** had been put in place that included back-to-back periods of reading/language arts. Ninth- and tenth- graders were also placed in leveled reading classes if their scores were below grade level. Not only did this structure provide blocks of reading instruction, but enabled teachers to have the same preparation period once a week, allowing time for a department meeting and for collaboration. Staff adopted two reading programs focusing on fluency, which have proven to be successful. Hall notes that the key to making these programs work is the **one-on-one** time students get with teachers or paraeducators.

Cal Gilbert's priority is also reading instruction. He says that a key reason Longfellow Elementary School moved out of improvement status to meet AYP for four consecutive years was **aligning all classes with the same reading curriculum.** "Before I became principal, 14 teachers were teaching 14 different curricula, with no connections across grade levels." Now all teachers are trained to use the same curriculum and a reading coach provides ongoing support for both teachers and children. All same-grade teachers and support staff meet every two weeks to talk about the progress of each student. "We received a Reading First grant and have trained teachers to be reading specialists focusing on scientifically based research. Reading comprehension raises all scores in every discipline," maintains Gilbert.

"**I align everything we do with the goals of our school improvement plan,**" declares **Melissa Sandven**. "This is the key to success of implementing any strategy." Not only are staff and students held accountable for making progress toward these goals, but all strategies and professional development activities are aligned to the goals. One goal is to have 80 percent of all students reach the state reading benchmark. Two of the strategies being used to achieve this are Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) and Differentiated Instruction. Sandven has made sure that ongoing professional development is provided for both strategies.

Randy Jensen believes that aligning the curriculum with standards has been a big part of his middle school's success, but emphasizes that long-lasting achievement will not occur without building a **school climate** where children know they are cared for, and are given top priority. "Each child has a personal adult advocate who makes sure that the student is taking the classes they need to obtain the skills to get where they are going," Jensen elaborates. The advocates generally look out for the students, recognize if they have problems, and push for their success. The advocates also help students develop a four-year plan for high school, and assist them with career exploration.

Porfiria Lopez-Trout attributes much of her success to **beginning a dialogue** with teachers about "what we need to do and where we need to go." She had heard from the language arts teachers that they needed more time for reading, and asked them if it would help to separate writing from reading. "They said that if we are going to be accountable for student reading scores, we need to have more time with our students," she explains. The schedule was adjusted to allow children an uninterrupted reading block. "We were already providing more time for ESL and children with special needs," says Lopez-Trout, "so it made sense to do it for all children."

2. Research has shown that leadership is second only to classroom instruction affecting student success. What specific practices or actions have you taken to boost student achievement?

"**I focus on what's best for the students,**" says **Porfiria Lopez-Trout**. "If students and teachers feel good about their purpose, then that is success. I try to be a positive motivator for children. I get hugs, even though they know me as the head figure. They trust that I am fair, and will 'do good' for them. It is important to me that I have real conversations with them."

Randy Jensen agrees: "**I focus on making kids feel successful, and I work on their self-esteem.**" One way of doing this, explains Jensen, is to give all students opportunities to be involved in various roles and activities in the school. "Rather than just having a few students be office aides, all students are given the chance. Many children need this self-esteem boost." One instructional change that Jensen made to give children greater opportunities was to **eliminate pull-out groups** for Title I, and place all students together in classrooms. "Children who were in pull-outs were labeled for life," says Jensen, "and the students didn't feel successful." Jensen notes that the new grouping also means teachers are accountable for teaching all children.

Another action Jensen took was to **hire a reading coach** who provides initial training in reading across the curriculum and continued guidance and support for the staff. The coach provides similar training and support in the SIOP, which enables teachers to be more effective teachers to ELL students. "The **middle school structure of teaming**, however, made this coaching more effective than schools in the district that didn't have teaming," observes Jensen. "Because of teaming, the coach could meet with teams of teachers during their common planning time on a weekly basis. This has proven to be a highly effective way of embedding professional development into the daily lives of teachers."

Arcella Hall believes that an important part of being an instructional leader is **finding effective strategies for teachers** to use. "I 'invite' teachers to further research the strategies and then adapt them for their own use, rather than force the strategies upon them," she states. Hall found that the **Cornell note-taking system** can help students engage with each other in reflecting on what they read and invited teachers to use them. Another strategy was from Marzano's Building Background Knowledge, which focuses on **effective vocabulary instruction**. Hall explains that half of her students' families speak only Spanish; one can't make an assumption that students have prior knowledge about a topic. "We must build their knowledge so that they have the information they need before reading a selection." Within the first few weeks of the school year teachers have told Hall that the strategies are working and are excited to learn more. "I provide time in meetings for "staff testimonials," remarks Hall, "which really helps build momentum for change."

"Committing to following **Montana's Indian Education for All law** has been and will continue to be important in closing the achievement gap," **Cal Gilbert** maintains. The law requires that all Indian and non-Indian students understand the history, culture, and contributions of Montana's Native American people. School staff members must work with tribes to develop curriculum on Native American culture and heritage, and be culturally responsive educators. "We design lessons using **culturally relevant methods and materials**," Gilbert comments. "An example is teaching writing using the animal skin stories derived from winter count models. A 'winter count' was a way Native American tribes recorded noteworthy events in tribal life that took place each winter. The events were described using pictographs painted on animal hides. We also teach reading using tribal stories centered on Montana specific tribes," Gilbert explains. He and his team based their school model on characteristics of high performing/high poverty schools including providing extra out-of-school classroom time, ensuring highly trained teachers, creating planning time for teachers, and above all believing that every child can learn at a high level. "Last year, there was virtually no gap in reading and math between American Indian students and their non-Indian peers," he affirms.

3. As a new principal at your school, what were some of the things you did first, and why?

"I hired some staff younger than me," jokes **Randy Jensen**. He became principal at his school after four years of teaching, and found himself the youngest staff member at

the age of 27. Jensen explains that he worked hard to **build relationships and earn staff respect** that first year. "After school I'd talk informally with teachers about their children and their lives outside of school, not focusing on test scores."

Jensen also had a strong belief in the success of a **middle school philosophy** and recognized that the middle school was one in name only, that it essentially operated as an elementary school, with very little teaming among staff and students. "The more we changed to using a true middle school philosophy, the more success we had," Jensen emphasizes. That philosophy includes schoolwide teaming, advisory programs, and a fully integrated curriculum, but above all is focused on the needs of individual students.

Arcella Hall and **Porfiria Lopez-Trout** both say that that **rushing into change won't work**. "Initially when I started at Kodiak Middle School, I didn't make many changes," Lopez-Trout recalls. I took the first year to study what might be needed—the strengths and weaknesses of the system. I recognized that children needed different levels of support in different areas and that it was important for us to determine what classes were most appropriate for each child." Hall adds that a principal needs first to listen to people, build relationships, respect the decisions that staff have made prior to her arrival, and then begin to look at what hasn't worked. "I first need to **understand the school culture** and not rush into changes that staff may not be ready for, but begin by increasing awareness for change."

Melissa Sandven also focused on building trust, but also began to "**build systems**" to make the environment more conducive for learning, and establish greater accountability for staff members and students. She established a **consistent schoolwide tardy policy** after she saw that students were given mixed messages when some teachers enforced the policy and others didn't. Tardiness decreased after the policy was put in place. Sandven also noticed that teaching assistants didn't have a schedule for their assignments, and wanted to make sure they were utilized effectively. She first asked teachers to tell her if they needed an assistant and for what purpose (e.g., for ELL or special education students, large numbers of students in a class). Sandven then put together a schedule and sent them to teachers. She revisits the schedules mid-year and makes necessary changes. "This helps provide more accountability for teachers to utilize assistants in the best way," remarks Sandven.

4. How have you determined what changes to make? What are some examples?

Randy Jensen advises: "Whatever you do first, try to **ensure that it is done well and is successful**. Then staff members will be excited and motivated to make future changes." One of the first changes he made was to incorporate an exploratory curriculum, where children could participate in one of 30 activities, such as learning to scuba dive or ski. This program is funded partially through donations, and some instructors are volunteers. Initially some teachers were hesitant about the program, but it became very successful in motivating children to come to school. As students showed more interest in being successful with academic studies, parents became excited about the program, and teachers soon were enthusiastic and eager to make other changes.

"**Analyzing data** is a huge part of determining what and how to change," maintains **Porfiria Lopez-Trout**. "You need to know what your students' and staff strengths and weaknesses are to know where change is needed." For example, classes had large numbers of students when she began, and there were many disciplinary actions. "We made some organizational changes that alleviated teacher stress by hiring a dean of students to deal with discipline schoolwide so that teachers wouldn't have to. That way they could get through the curriculum," says Lopez-Trout. Although some teachers may not have been comfortable with these changes at first, Lopez-Trout has observed that as they noticed fewer disciplinary actions, and were less stressed, they saw the benefit to themselves and their students.

Cal Gilbert also made some unique changes involving discipline. One was to **eliminate in-school suspension and create a "character education room"** in which children attend for a minimal amount of time and concentrate on character traits and schoolwork. The classroom is attended by a certified character education teacher, and is not a punitive environment as the suspension room had been. Since implementing this, disciplinary actions have decreased. Gilbert advises, "Don't be afraid to make changes. Listen to others around you and take their suggestions—even if something sounds bizarre, it just might work!"

"A principal needs to constantly **scan for promising practices**, and for those that will fit into their context," says **Arcella Hall**. A key to her success is spending time on her own professional development by seeking the best information in the field. Last year she attended a mini-workshop where she learned about using a writing prompt like those

from the Washington Assessment of Student Learning [WASL] as part of the semester final. Hall brought the idea back to her own English department staff and "invited" them to research it and to consider using the prompt. The staff members decided to implement the schoolwide writing test. As they receive their scores, students are given an annotated rubric that outlines the changes they would need to make to pass the test. Two of the staff were trained on scoring the test, and taught the rest of the department how to score it.

5. How have you been able to foster trust and build leadership in your school staff?

"When I find strengths in others, I give them **leadership roles**," says **Porfiria Lopez-Trout**. She created a dean of students position for Ron Bryant, a staff member who is also football coach and is studying to obtain his administrative license. Additionally, teacher teaming has enabled teachers to provide input into schoolwide decisionmaking. Teachers serve on schoolwide committees in areas of personal interest—discipline, communications, safe and drug-free schools, meeting AYP, grantwriting, quality schools, and student intervention.

For **Randy Jensen**, an important factor in building trust is **being accessible** to students and staff. "My office is located right next to the library, in the middle of the building which is convenient for students and teachers to drop by and visit. I encourage anyone to come in."

Cal Gilbert emphasizes that he "is committed to supporting all staff with a sincere appreciation for their talents." He has a **contract with all staff** that outlines four expectations: to

focus on academic achievement and address issues that impede education; take calculated risks; display professionalism; and "to provide loyalty, but not blind loyalty"—to students, parents, colleagues, the district, the board, and the program. In return, Gilbert promises to provide loyalty and support (publicly and privately), work with the district to facilitate staff members' efforts, and see that teachers' performance as educators is evaluated based on what they do academically. "What we go into, we go into together," he asserts.

Melissa Sandven is fostering a culture of learning among her staff and facilitates teachers working and learning with their peers. The school has implemented "**peer coaching**" for a few years now, and Sandven provides substitute teachers so that teachers can observe each other in the classroom. "I allow staff to plot the course. I give them the data and ask them what they think? How should we do this? Where should we start?" Staff development for differentiated instruction began when teachers said that they learned best by reading and discussing books together. So Sandven bought each teacher a research-based book on differentiated instruction and had them form discussion groups.

"Principals need to recognize who among the staff are ready for leadership responsibilities, **provide the opportunities for staff to lead**, and nurture their leadership strengths," observes **Arcella Hall**. "I have strong departmental leaders, and I provide a common prep time for them to meet together. They will be taking a leadership role in upcoming staff development sessions."

6. How do you see your role in supporting teachers and how do you provide the feedback and resources that they need to be successful?

"Having a structure in place to provide time for teachers to collaborate is one thing that I can do to support teachers," declares **Randy Jensen**. "Another is keeping the class sizes small whenever possible." Jensen also reiterates that giving teachers clear expectations of what you expect from them is important, and that he doesn't want to burden teachers with unrealistic or unnecessary expectations.

Melissa Sandven believes that her role is to "model continuous learning, support teachers in this process, and give as much **continuous feedback** to teachers as possible." Part of being an instructional leader for Sandven is to make sure that there is "high cognitive demand" in the classroom. "The research shows," she affirms, that the "quality and level of instruction is what matters with improvement, not only managing your classroom or your students." On one classroom visit Sandven observed a discussion about civil rights in which students were beginning to be excited and interested. The teacher ended the discussion, however, and moved quickly on to another lesson. This left many students feeling let down and frustrated. Sandven later met with the teacher and talked about letting the students continue to talk in the future, so as to keep them engaged.

Arcella Hall agrees that **observing teachers in the classroom** is important. "When I ask teachers how I can best support them, they say that they want me to come into their class, provide feedback, and then provide them with staff

development to improve," she says. Hall visits classrooms frequently and looks for teachers using specific strategies that are outlined in the school improvement plan. An expectation of all teachers is that they use "entry tasks"—tasks that help students focus on learning and can maximize the learning time. During her classroom walkthroughs, Hall records on half sheets of paper called "short shot slips" how often entry tasks were used, and what she saw to keep students engaged. In a letter to all teachers she summarizes what she saw in all classes, and points out examples of what teachers are doing. She suggests to teachers that they stop by to see what other teachers are doing during their prep times. "I try to highlight great things I am seeing and give people recognition for what they are doing well," stresses Hall.

7. How do you promote stronger ties between school staff, families, and students?

"When I first became principal, I started a parent advisory committee that had representatives from all aspects of our community," **Randy Jensen** remembers. "We had monthly family meetings at which we provided dinner. The children could go to tutorials, and family members could go to parenting classes or attend the tutorials with their children. These meetings really brought in diverse families."

"We also started **Hispanic Parent Advisory meetings** that were facilitated by a counselor who spoke Spanish," says Jensen. "Upon the advice of parents, we provided activities like soccer and programs for families to receive their GED. In partnership with Idaho State University we hold an aerobics class especially for Hispanic women—25–30 women attend. These kinds of activities made a difference in that Hispanic families saw the school as a positive organization for themselves and their children. Without the Hispanic advisory group, we would not have known what parents want for their children to succeed, and how they want us to help their children."

"At a principals' conference, I heard about a school that had implemented **student-led conferences**," reflects **Arcella Hall**. "We implemented this four times so far and they have been a huge success in bringing students, parents, and teachers together for the common goal of student success." Students are empowered to take responsibility for understanding what they need to accomplish to do well, and also can fully involve their families in this understanding. "The number of students enrolling in college preparatory classes has skyrocketed because now families and students understand together what they need to do to be ready for college."

Hall has also required all teachers to use an **online grading program** so that families can access their children's grades, attendance records, and other information. Hall also instituted a uniform class syllabus so that families know what is being taught in classes and can help students prepare for assignments. Hall acknowledges that staff find this challenging, but she realizes that change takes time and if the practice is successful, staff will be more positive.

"I build trust by showing the community that kids and their families come first," says **Cal Gilbert**. "We strive to be more than the traditional school. We are a **community resource**.

A parent resource center is on site to help families in need. We have traditional parenting classes, before- and after-school activities for no cost. We are the 'go to' place for many struggling families. The list goes on ... Because we do these things, families who never felt comfortable in a school for all kinds of legitimate reasons have become fiercely loyal to Longfellow Elementary.

"When we ensure that students and families have these services, we provide a foundation for increasing academic achievement," Gilbert emphasizes. "Our mission statement is 'Learning— whatever it takes ... No excuses.' It is a short statement but it encompasses everything a school should do."

Summing Up

Our conversations with principals clearly show the degree to which educators across the Northwest strive to be effective school leaders. These principals prioritized instruction in key areas based on their assessment of the data, aligned curriculum schoolwide, and aligned all strategies with the schoolwide priorities they identified. They motivated their staff members and students to perform at their highest levels by creating a culture of caring, trust, and support; and a sense of urgency and accountability for change—"no excuses," as Cal Gilbert asserts. These leaders foster a culture of continuous learning in which they learn what strategies will make a difference, and motivate their staff members to learn and become leaders in the school.

Next we turn to a pair of recent studies focused on specific practices employed by principals in improving schools. The themes from the research echo the strategies that the Northwest principals use in their schools. As you read, we encourage you to draw your own connections between what the research says, what educators are doing in practice, and what approaches might be most appropriate for your school.

PRACTICES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP

Leithwood (2005) notes that school leaders "need to know where their efforts will have the biggest payoff. But even this knowledge is not enough. Successful leaders also need a substantial repertoire of practices (or skills) to draw on in order to exercise such influence" (p. 7). Two recent studies that identify specific implications for principal practice are described below.

Three Ways Principals of Improving Schools Stand Out

Based on an eight-year study of public elementary school principals for the Consortium on Chicago School Research, Sebring and Bryk's (2000) *School Leadership and the Bottom Line in Chicago* identifies three key areas in which principals of improving schools "stand out":

1. Leadership style
2. Reform strategies
3. The issues they focus on

According to the study, productive principals are strong managers as well as instructional leaders, characterized by "an inclusive, facilitative orientation; an institutional focus on student learning; efficient management; and a reliance on a combination of pressure and support to motivate others" (p. 441). When these principals direct staff members to make changes, in other words, they can be trusted to provide the necessary resources and to see the project through.

Four strategies for reform shared by principals of improving schools in the study were as follows:

1. Productive principals begin by addressing a few highly visible problems that can be resolved quickly. This strategy shows staff members that principals are serious about making necessary changes.

2. Productive principals focus on long-term changes to the instructional core. They make organizational changes that promote best practices, provide targeted staff development, and "stay on top of the myriad day-to-day decisions that must be made about the schedule, assemblies, parents' meetings, and so on, in order to maximize instructional time and resources for learning" (p. 441).

3. Productive principals collaborate with others to develop—and monitor progress toward—a "comprehensive, coherent plan for school development." Productive principals in the study worked closely with parents, teachers, and others in the school community to establish goals and strategies for improvement in five key areas: school leadership, parent involvement, professional development and collaboration, student-centered learning climate, and classroom instruction.

4. Productive principals attack incoherence. School improvement plans help principals ensure that strategies are aligned with goals and that practices are implemented according to a timeline. Principals follow up on goals to

make sure they are being implemented and are working. Schools in the study that did not demonstrate improvement were characterized by high levels of incoherence among different aspects of the reform program, staff development that appeared disconnected from school improvement plans, and lack of trust among students, parents, teachers, and administrators.

For a more indepth discussion of steps principals can take to build trust within schools, see two previous issues of By Request: *Building Trusting Relationships for School Improvement: Implications for Principals and Teachers*, and *Building Trust with Schools and Diverse Families: A Foundation for Lasting Partnerships*, available online at www.nwrel.org/request.

Successful Instructional Leaders: Practices and Priorities

In a much smaller study of leadership practices in schools implementing the America's Choice reform model, Supovitz and Poglinco (2001) used principal interviews, survey data, and site visits to identify a set of behaviors characteristic of effective instructional leaders. Their findings, largely consistent with earlier research on instructional leadership (see Cotton, 2003, for example), included the following.

Effective instructional leaders:

Create a safe environment for teachers to take risks, experiment, and continue learning. Distinguishing clearly between evaluative classroom visits and visits geared toward instructional coaching, for example, helped

principals in the study build more supportive relationships with teachers and foster "an environment that valued the exploration and improvement of the craft of teaching..." (p. 9).

Emphasize collaboration and communication. Instructional leaders in the study "saw collaboration and communication not as ends in themselves, but as important processes for spreading a culture of instructional improvement" (p. 9). They focused on strengthening relationships, engaging staff members in joint projects, and developing "expertise across the building" (p. 10).

Develop other leaders. As promoted in transformational models of leadership, many of the strong instructional leaders in this study emphasized the importance of developing leadership committees among teachers and "distributing leadership responsibilities across the staff" (p. 10). This not only allowed them to develop and draw on others' expertise, but freed up more time for the principals themselves to visit classrooms and focus on instructional matters.

Use symbolic acts to reinforce "visions of instructional focus." "Statements or acts that shake up a school's faculty can unshackle them from deeply ingrained ways of doing business and help them to see possibilities that were unimaginable before," contend Supovitz and Poglinco (p. 11). One principal held a wake for an old practice that had outlived its purpose at the school, asking teachers to file past a paper shredder set in a cardboard coffin to pass old checklists "into the great beyond." Another repeatedly drew teachers' attention to "what appeared to be a wildly

ambitious goal" for student improvement—to raise test scores from 10 percent of students performing at grade level to 90 percent; within three years, nearly 60 percent of students had met standards, and teachers continue to work toward what is now an "imaginable" goal.

Develop a consistent set of expectations and incentives for teachers that keeps the entire staff focused on meeting schoolwide goals. Principals identified as effective instructional leaders were clear with teachers about their expectations, and publicly acknowledged teachers' efforts to implement new strategies in their classrooms. As one principal in the study commented, "we do everything within our power to give teachers the opportunity to do what they need and hold them accountable for doing it" (p. 12).

Four recommendations for "rearranging priorities as a principal" emerged from this study:

1. Participate frequently—and meaningfully—in classrooms. Eighty-eight percent of principals in this study who were identified as strong instructional leaders visited classrooms on a daily or almost daily basis. The remaining 12 percent visited classrooms at least once or twice a week. During class visits, effective principals "focused more on talking with students and examining students' work than they did on teachers' behavior" (p. 13). Based on this information, they were able not only to assess student performance, but to identify more specifically the areas in which they could be of assistance to teachers.

2. Allocate regular blocks of time for instructional, managerial, and political matters. Several of the successful principals noted that they will only schedule meetings and do paperwork early in the morning or after classes are out in the afternoon. This not only sends a message to parents and teachers that student learning is their priority, but ensures that crises and administrative details are not allowed to eat away the time they need to give to instructional matters.

3. Facilitate teacher development of content-area knowledge. Although many principals in the study expressed a need to expand their own content area knowledge, particularly at the secondary level, "they recognized their primary role as facilitators of the acquisition of content and pedagogical content knowledge of their teachers" (p. 12).

4. Reconceptualize the principal-teacher relationship to spend more time in the classroom observing instruction and student work. Support teachers as much as possible, including enhancing teachers' skills to improve student learning.

Several themes consistent with the larger research base on school leadership emerge from these studies. The most obvious, perhaps, is that relationships matter. Effective principals build trust with and among staff, students, families, and other members of the school community. They work collaboratively with parents, teachers, and other stakeholders to establish a common mission, a clear focus, and specific goals. In doing so, they also foster shared leadership, develop staff capacity for change, and establish a climate of continuous improvement and accountability across the school building. In all of these ways, principals exert direct influence over the quality of teaching and learning in their schools.

As Principal Melissa Sandven remarked during our interview, "Principals need to create a culture of continuous learning while supporting teachers in the process." In order to do this, however, they must have the skills, the resources, and the time to attend effectively to both the management and instructional ends of the job. Helping principals find ways to "lead bifocally" (Alvy & Robbins, 2005) within the unique leadership context of their schools is fundamental to all students' learning and to the whole community's success.

In the following section, we offer a few final suggestions for supporting principals' efforts, taken from a number of research studies. We also offer some ideas from several Oregon teachers on how principals can be effective leaders.

RETAINING STRONG LEADERS: ADVICE FOR TEACHERS, SUPERINTENDENTS, AND POLICYMAKERS

As expectations of schools and school leaders change, districts have found themselves with a shortage of skilled administrators prepared to lead school improvement efforts and address achievement gaps in traditionally underperforming student groups. According to NWREL's 2004 Regional Needs Assessment, schools' ability to support and retain effective leaders continues to be a major factor in the school improvement process, particularly in Northwest schools facing the greatest obstacles to achieving AYP (Barnett & Greenough, 2004, p. 12). High-poverty schools across the Northwest cite the greatest needs, with 59 percent of teachers and 70 percent of principals reporting that "developing instructional leadership throughout [their] district and schools to facilitate improved school performance" demands more or much more attention (p. 13). At the secondary level, the numbers are even higher, with 89 percent of high school principals in low-income schools reporting a need to devote more of their time and attention to instructional matters.

In this critical area, teachers, school board members, superintendents, fellow administrators, and policymakers all have important roles to play. Research offers the following suggestions:

Help new principals make meaningful connections to the school and the community. This is something all members of a school community can do. Introduce principals to fellow teachers, parents, administrators, and

community leaders, and invite them to participate in local organizations and events. Even long-time principals benefit from developing new or stronger connections with a range of community members (Alvy & Robbins, 2005).

Promote networking among area principals. Bring principals together to discuss school improvement efforts, facilitate "non-evaluative principal 'walk-throughs' of other high schools," and encourage mentoring programs for new and ongoing principals (Joftus, 2004, p. 5; Petzko, 2002). Make it clear to all principals that school and district leaders place value on time spent consulting with and learning from others.

Emphasize training on leadership issues specific to special education, English language learners, and other "subgroups" of the student population. "Administrators who clearly understand the needs of students with disabilities, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the instructional challenges that educators who work with students with disabilities face," stress DiPaola and Walther-Thomas (2003), "are better prepared to provide appropriate support" (p. 9). Likewise, principals who have made a point of learning more about second language acquisition and about the diverse cultural and linguistic experiences students contribute to the school are far better able to create a meaningful plan for serving all students, foster a climate of respect, and ensure relevant and ongoing training for the entire staff (Wrigley, 2000, pp. 2–3).

Encourage and provide support for distributive leadership efforts. Distributive leadership not only helps build leadership capacity across the school building, but can ease new principals' transition into a school. Barnett and Greenough (2004) add that "creating a school leadership team made up of staff members who are committed to and heavily invested in the success of the school can buffer the negative impact of staff and administrator turnover, providing team members stay involved over the long term (p. 12)." A principal's willingness to share decisionmaking power also communicates his or her trust in fellow staff members, an essential step toward building the rich, respectful relationships fundamental to lasting school change (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Consider redistributing principals' job duties. Management and instructional leadership responsibilities need not be performed by one individual, especially with the multiple roles principals are expected to play. "While both of these roles are important for well-run schools, they do not require the same skills, abilities, or interests, and they may not often exist in one individual," according to Fouts, Stuen, Anderson, and Parnell (2000, p. 28). If possible, avoid simply transferring all managerial duties to an assistant principal. As Petzko (2002) points out, the assistant principalship is better utilized as a critical training ground for aspiring principals rather than as a discipline and attendance manager.

Align principal job descriptions and evaluation criteria with school improvement plans. "By focusing professional development on instructional issues and basing principal evaluation on instructional improvement, superintendents can create powerful learning communities within their districts," suggests Lashway. "Without attempting to micromanage classrooms, district leaders can be firm in asserting the instructional agenda and aligning the organization to support it" (Lashway, 2002, p. 5).

Support new teacher induction programs and the "equitable distribution of highly qualified teachers throughout the district" (Joftus, 2004, p. 8). Support for such efforts not only makes principals' work training new teachers easier, but reinforces school and district commitments to closing the achievement gap between traditionally advantaged and disadvantaged schools. Along the same lines, state and district leaders can ensure "that schools with high proportions of at-risk youth receive sufficient resources to address their academic needs" (Joftus, p. 9).

Support principals in gathering and making effective use of data. District leaders in particular can provide valuable assistance in helping principals collect, disaggregate, and interpret data, and developing effective means of sharing it with teachers, parents, and the public (Cotton, 2003; Joftus, 2004).

Provide incentives for effective principals to remain in struggling schools. Financial incentives, from tuition waivers to pay increases, are certainly one way to do this. Improving working conditions by affording principals greater flexibility, offering more control over personnel and curriculum decisions, and increasing administrative support, also send a powerful message that principals' contributions are valued by the school and the district.

Encourage greater attention to instructional issues in principal development programs, as well as more training time in school settings. "Program content should incorporate knowledge of instruction, organizational development, and change management, as well as leadership skills," argue Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005). A growing movement in leadership circles also supports a two-tiered certification program for new principals, the second part of which is based on hands-on training and performance on the job.

Support quality, ongoing training for principals (Petzko, 2002). Principal professional development, often overlooked in today's busy, cash-strapped districts, has become increasingly important as school leaders attempt to adjust to new sets of demands and expectations (Davis et al., 2005). For detailed information on principal development resources in the Northwest, see NWREL's June 2005 publication *Principal Leadership for Accountability: Optimizing the Use of Title II Resources*, available online at www.nwrel.org/planning/reports/accountability

TEACHERS' ADVICE TO PRINCIPALS

While the previous section focuses on how to retain effective principals, we should also look briefly at the principal practices that will help retain good teachers. As we have discussed throughout this booklet, effective principals support teachers and partner with them in creating a high-performing learning community. To understand how principals can best support teachers, we sat down with four teachers from an Oregon school and asked them to share their thoughts.

What can principals do to be most effective?

- Recognize, utilize, and develop talents of staff and parents. Give teachers the opportunity to be a part of faculty meetings and provide other opportunities to develop leadership skills.

- Trust teachers to be professionals and that they will keep up with their craft.

- Get to know the community to understand its needs and to create a more welcoming culture. For example, a principal who helps out with bus duty can get to know parents and children and open doors for families to come to the school. This is more valuable than merely sending out a note. One teacher remarked, "It may not sound like much, but it sets the tone."

- Provide continuous professional development related to school improvement goals. An effective principal will look for grants to make this possible. For example, when a school recognized that ELL students were not doing as well as other students, the principal had the staff focus on differentiated instruction and provided workshops on the SIOP model throughout the year. "This principal brought in grants to make these opportunities possible," said one teacher.

- Support teachers if there are parent-teacher conflicts and have faith and confidence in your staff. "During a parent-teacher-principal meeting, a parent told me I was incompetent and I was trying hard to bite my tongue," one teacher elaborated. "My principal stepped in and changed the direction of the conversation to be more constructive. She realized I needed a little defending."

What advice do you have for principals?

- Be very visible and available to teachers. Merely saying "I have an open door policy" is not enough. You need to have a "drop-in policy" where you invite people to visit. Try putting out a bowl of candy to encourage staff to drop in and get communication started.

- Ask teachers what you should look for during classroom visits so as to provide meaningful feedback.

- Set the standard for continuous learning by assigning book readings and having discussion groups that are connected with specific expectations and goals.

- Allow teachers to choose what they want to do during planning time and with whom they plan. Sometimes planning times are structured and dictated by the principal, or the topic of discussion is not related to teachers' needs.

- Provide more opportunities for staff to meet with staff in other schools, so that there can be a coordinated effort districtwide and opportunities for teachers to learn from each other.

CONCLUSION

Without question, the role of principal is a demanding one. In underfunded and low-performing districts, the "unrelenting daily challenges and steep learning curve" can feel particularly overwhelming, especially to beginning principals and newcomers to the school or community (Barnett & Greenough, 2004, p. 12). Even under the best of circumstances, however, there is always more for principals to know and more to do.

The literature is replete with strategies for improving schools and leading change. Rather than focusing only on what principals did to achieve success, we asked principals questions related to the "whys and hows" of their successes. Simply implementing a strategy will not guarantee its success; it must be supported by specific actions. As Principal Randy Jensen indicated, merely hiring an instructional coach is not what made the difference in student achievement; it was the collaborative system he structured and nurtured in the school that facilitated the success of that approach.

We hope that the brief summary of recent research and the conversations with regional principals included here have provided useful insights into the ways school leaders can and do influence student learning. We encourage you to delve deeper into the resources listed on the following pages and to contact the principals profiled here for more keys to their success.

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Organizations

American Association of School Administrators
(www.aasa.org)
- Alaska Association of School Administrators
(www.alaskaacsa.org)
- Idaho Association of School Administrators
(www.idschadm.org)
- Confederation of Oregon School Administrators
(www.cosa.k12.or.us)
- Washington Association of School Administrators
(www.wasa-oly.org)

National Association of Elementary School Principals
(www.naesp.org/)
- Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals
(www.ak-principals.org/)

National Association of Secondary School Principals
(www.nassp.org)
- Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals
(www.alaska.net/~aassp/)
- Association of Washington School Principals
(www.awsp.org/)

The Wallace Foundation (www.wallacefoundation.org)
Information about the Foundation's initiative on educational leadership can be found here as well as many research and policy papers on educational leadership and preparation programs.

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APPENDIX A

Several decades worth of research have focused on the relationship between principal practice and student learning, and on connections between school improvement and leadership style. In an effort to synthesize this data and provide a more comprehensive look at the areas in which principals directly and indirectly affect student achievement, Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of 70 of the most rigorous of these studies. Their report, *Balanced Leadership: What 30 Years of Research Tells Us About the Effect of Leadership on Student Achievement*, identifies 21 areas of responsibility through which principal behavior significantly affects learning. These 21 areas are listed and defined in rank order below.

1. **Culture:** The extent to which the principal fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation.
2. **Order:** The extent to which the principal establishes a set of standard operating procedures and routines.
3. **Discipline:** The extent to which the principal protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus.
4. **Resources:** The extent to which the principal provides teachers with the material and professional development necessary for the successful execution of their jobs.
5. **Curriculum, instruction, and assessment:** The extent to which the principal is directly involved in the

[1]Adapted with author permission from Waters, T., Marzano, R., & McNulty, B. (2003). *Balanced leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement* [Working paper]. Denver, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, pp. 9–10.

design and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices.

6. **Focus:** The extent to which the principal establishes clear goals and keeps those goals in the forefront of the school's attention.
7. **Knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment:** The extent to which the principal is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices.
8. **Visibility:** The extent to which the principal has quality contact and interactions with teachers and students.
9. **Contingent rewards:** The extent to which the principal recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments.
10. **Communication:** The extent to which the principal establishes strong lines of communication with teachers and among students.
11. **Outreach:** The extent to which the principal is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders.
12. **Input:** The extent to which the principal involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies.
13. **Affirmation:** The extent to which the principal recognizes and celebrates school accomplishments and acknowledges failures.
14. **Relationship:** The extent to which the principal demonstrates an awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and staff.
15. **Change agent:** The extent to which the principal is willing to and actively challenges status quo.
16. **Optimizer:** The extent to which the principal inspires and leads new and challenging innovations.
17. **Ideals/Beliefs:** The extent to which the principal communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling.

18. **Monitors/Evaluates:** The extent to which the principal monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning.
19. **Flexibility:** The extent to which the principal adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent.
20. **Situational awareness:** The extent to which the principal is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems.
21. **Intellectual stimulation:** The extent to which the principal ensures that faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school's culture.