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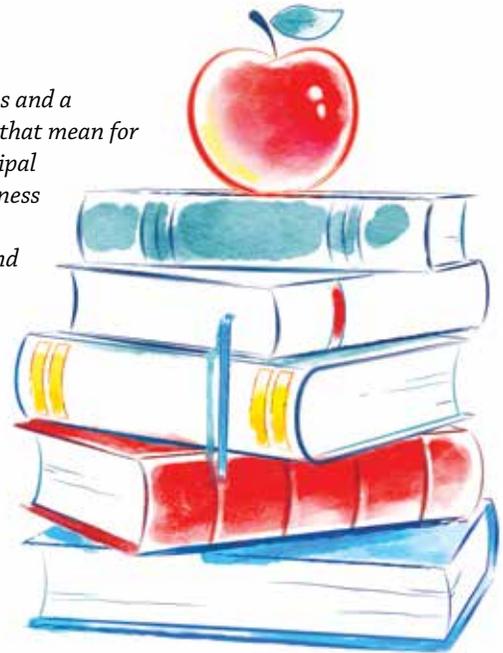




FEATURE SECTION

WELLNESS

The start of a new year always means resolutions and a commitment to health and wellness. What does that mean for school leaders? For students? Washington Principal wanted to find out how readers incorporate wellness into their busy lives — and in the lives of their students and staff. This issue includes articles and guest columns on the topic of wellness.



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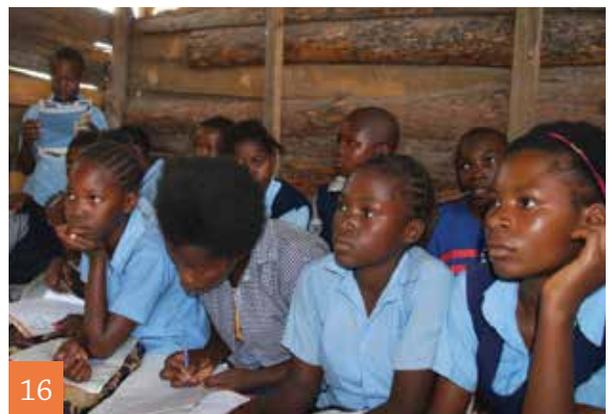
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COURTESY DR. MACHELLE BEILKE

Cover photo: Former Bethel School District principal Machel Beilke has found a new calling helping students, teachers and schools in Zambia.

Photo courtesy Dr. Machel Beilke

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Get Well Soon

David Morrill

Communications Director

Sitting is the new smoking. Now there's a bold statement. The first time I heard that, I was definitely taken aback. We hear lots of bold and brash statements these days, especially as campaign season heats up (some of them even might be true). The Mayo Clinic did a study in 2014 and found that two hours of continuous sitting cancels the cardiovascular benefits of 20 minutes of exercise. You'd probably be better off standing up and having a donut, but don't quote me on that, I'm not a doctor, nor do I play one on TV. What I can tell you though is there's an abundance of research now showing that not only does prolonged sitting increase many of the same health risks as smoking, but that standing can increase blood flow and oxygen to the brain, releasing brain and mood-enhancing chemicals.

As a result, I've switched to a sit/stand desk at work and end up standing at least 80 percent of my day. We have five people now at AWSP with the same type of desk. Schools around the world are switching kids to standing desks. Aside from the health benefits of standing, which include a 15-20 percent increase in calories burned just by standing, research indicates standing can reduce restlessness and distraction. We know there's no magic bullet for academic success, but we can eliminate obstacles and put our students in the best position to learn as possible.

In fact, Washington already does this on many levels, one of them being the Breakfast After the Bell program. The Academic Success program from Chelan High School we featured last year shows what can be accomplished when students are emotionally supported. Our recent Watch D.O.G.S. video shows the difference that having more positive adult relationships can have in schools as well. The point of this intro isn't that we should all be standing all day long, but that as we strive to provide our students with the best supports possible to put them in a position to learn, we should keep our own wellness in mind as well. It's like they say on the airplane, you have to put your own mask on first so you can be in a position to help others. Take care of yourself so you can be the best leader you can be — you, your students and staff all deserve it. ■



David Morrill is the AWSP Communications Director. He serves as Managing Editor for Washington Principal.



Gene Sharratt joins us for A Matter of Principals

Gene Sharratt, executive director of the Washington Student Achievement Council, sits down to discuss hot topics in education and the transition to post-high school. Topics include assessment, the College Bound Scholarship, and much more. Find it on our Web page or on iTunes.

AWSP Design Committee

AWSP is building a new website from the ground up. Interested in the content, look and feel, or features of our site? We need a small group of 6-10 volunteers to participate in focus group interviews. If you'd like to help shape the future of AWSP's site, email David Morrill at david@awsp.org.

New Watch D.O.G.S. video

In the last issue of Washington Principal, we featured a story on the Watch D.O.G.S. program, which aims to get more fathers involved in their children's education.

We've followed up the article with a new video looking at the impact of Watch D.O.G.S. on the students, staff and the volunteers themselves at Seven Oaks Elementary in Lacey. Check it out at awsp.org/watchdogs.



Golden Apple Moments

KTCS 9, with support and funding from PEMCO Insurance, has revamped the Golden Apple Awards. The program, now known as the Golden Apple Moments, celebrates educators, programs and schools making a positive difference in Washington state education from early childhood

through high school. From January through May of this year, KCTS 9 is sharing the success story of one of these innovative educators or programs. To date, Yakima's Music en Acción and AWSP principal Jessica Calabrese-Granger have been featured. View them online at bit.ly/1QpuXVW.



Did you know...?

About 300 educators have enrolled in an administration preparation program each year for the past five years. Of the 1,588 that have completed their programs since 2011, almost 45 percent have secured a principal or assistant principal position. Many more have acquired central office administrative positions.

Also, within the last five years, there has been a 30 percent increase in the percentage of educators securing their first principal or assistant principal position within the first year following the completion of their principal preparation program.

ASK A PRINCIPAL

Maintaining Wellness

We asked principals what they do to maintain wellness in their school, whether for students or staff? Here are some great ideas from the students and staff at Mercer Island High School.

“ Last year our staff focused many of our training opportunities with wellness themes. We held a half-day staff training on stress and wellness. We invited a professional cook who focused her training on healthy meals. We also invited a nutritionist, a Zumba coach/trainer, sleep doctor and few other professionals. These were all mini workshops within that half-day training that staff could select to attend. This year we told staff that if they wish to go out during prep period to exercise, we would gladly support it. We have a men's basketball team that works out two times a week during the school day; we have groups of staff members walking together; and we have a group of staff members who ride their bikes to work.

For the students, we have been working with the ASB to come up with ideas on how to help our students reduce stress since they take such heavy loads of classes. Here are a few ideas the ASB implemented:

- Dodgeball tournament right after first-quarter grades
- Hot chocolate days: Students in ASB set up a hot chocolate stand and offer free hot chocolate to students.
- ASB takes turns greeting our students when they arrive every morning.
- ASB also set up a "date night" for staff. They offer to babysit little ones so the staff members can go out on a date with their loved one.
- ASB also set up an electronic way for students to call out something positive and nice to say to another student.

While I am sure these ideas are not original, it is some of what goes on day to day at Mercer Island High School."

Vicki Puckett, Principal
Mercer Island High School
Mercer Island School District

APPY HOUR



This issue's Appy Hour app isn't an app at all, it's the Apple Watch.

It seems fitting for an issue with a wellness theme to focus on ways that technology can help keep us, well...well. The Apple Watch can track your heart rate, steps and distance (hardcore runners will want to wait for a future version with GPS), and remind you to stand throughout the day. It uses a clever three ring interface to help you monitor your daily activity level. A green ring shows you progress toward your daily exercise goal, a red ring shows you how close you are to your calorie burn goal, and a blue ring tracks your progress toward your standing goal. All of this data syncs back to your iPhone in an Activity app and the Health app.

The built-in workout app can track cycling, walking, and running workouts, as well as the elliptical, rowing machine, stair stepper, and an "other" category. Third party apps, like Pocket Yoga, can help track a wider array of workouts.

What else can the watch do? With some clever charging (basically as you get ready for bed and as you get ready for your day), you can even monitor sleep quality and use the watch's vibrations to wake you up without the sound of an alarm, a feature spouses with different schedules are sure to appreciate. For you smartphone addicts, the watch's notifications might even help you avoid the repetitive stress injury of repeatedly pulling your phone out of your pocket or purse every few minutes.

While the Apple Watch requires an iPhone to pair with it, other hardware makers are coming out with a nice variety of smartwatches running Android Wear. Aside from smartwatches, fitness trackers like Fitbit and the Microsoft Band are great options for monitoring activity. Planning with Data is AWSP Leadership Framework criterion three, so start gathering some data of your own to keep you healthy and active.

Time Out

Why Time Away from Work is Essential for School Leaders

Jennifer Kindle

*Principal, Selah High School
Selah SD*

When I was asked

to write a column on a wellness topic for this issue of Washington Principal, my first thought was that I am the last person who should be providing advice on this issue. Over my years as an administrator, I have had a difficult time finding balance between my professional and personal life. Between the daily responsibilities and the evening supervision of a high school principal, when do we find the time to take care of ourselves?

“ What I quickly began to realize is that I was more productive at work because I had spent the time to relax and rejuvenate at home.

Where I have found the most success is to make commitments to myself in regard to my personal wellness. Quite a few years ago, I decided that I would not take work home. I committed to working hard while at the office and staying that extra hour to finish up necessary items. At that point I would leave and be committed to my home and family for the rest of the evening. I really found this to be liberating as I was never very good at working from home, but always felt the pressure of

the work I brought home to finish. What I quickly began to realize is that I was more productive at work because I had spent the time to relax and rejuvenate at home.

The next commitment I made to find balance was to ensure that I am there to watch my own two sons in their games and events. I am lucky to have a superintendent who supports this idea, as well as other administrators to help with supervision. As a leadership team, we meet at the beginning of the month to assign supervision. Our families' events are the priority. Nine times out of ten we are able to find solutions within the team that meet everyone's needs by planning ahead with these priorities in mind.

Finally, I try to do something every month for me. This is something fun that fulfills me personally. Last month, I took a trip to Mexico. It was great to spend some time in the sun and just relax around the pool. This

month, my son and I are planning a ski trip to White Pass. During the spring and summer, I spend a great deal of time camping and going to country music concerts with friends and family.

As far as attending to my personal wellness, I am still a work in progress. Even with the commitments I have made, I still find the pressure and stress of the work get the best of me at times and upset the balance. But through all this, I know that I have to keep focusing on ways to keep perspective so that I can be effective for the students who are counting on me while finding ways to have fun and enjoy life. ■



Jennifer Kindle is principal of Selah High School and is serving as president of AWSP for 2015-16. She has been a principal for 15 years.



LEADERSHIP FROM THE MIDDLE



Michael Fullan

EDITOR'S NOTE: Michael Fullan is Professor Emeritus at OISE/University of Toronto and Special Adviser on Education to Ontario's Premier, Dalton McGuinty. He will serve as the closing speaker at the AWSP/WASA Summer Conference June 26-28 in Spokane. Washington Principal has been granted permission to reprint an abbreviated version of this article, which originally appeared in Education Canada magazine. To read the piece in full, visit <http://bit.ly/1R1jbox>.

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Improving Instruction, Engaging Communities, Closing the Gap

My colleagues and I have been working on “whole system change” (how all schools in a province/state/country can improve) since we carried out the evaluation of England’s literacy and numeracy strategy from 1998-2002. We then applied the lessons from England to Ontario’s reform strategy that began in 2003.

In a previous article, I identified the “big ideas” as:

- 1. All children can learn**
- 2. A small number of key priorities**
- 3. Resolute leadership**
- 4. Collective capacity**
- 5. Strategies with precision**
- 6. Intelligent accountability**
- 7. All means all.**

We have learned a great deal about whole system change, which we have captured in a complete case study of Ontario, 2003-2015. As we examined and worked with systems around the world — some that were relatively centralized and some relatively decentralized — we began to search for a more powerful way to seek whole system success regardless of the starting point.

Continued on page 10

The answer, and the focus of this article, is “Leadership from the Middle” (LftM), first identified by Hargreaves and Braun in their evaluation of the implementation of a special education initiative in Ontario. For this initiative, the government allocated \$25 million to the Council of Ontario Directors of Education to lead implementation across all 72 districts. The government, if you like, asked “the middle” — the districts — to lead system change.

LFTM AND ITS RATIONALE

In education system terms, the top is the state, the middle is districts or regions, and the bottom is schools and communities. Top-down leadership doesn’t last even if you get a lot of the pieces right, because it is too difficult to get, and especially to sustain, widespread buy-in from the bottom. In many

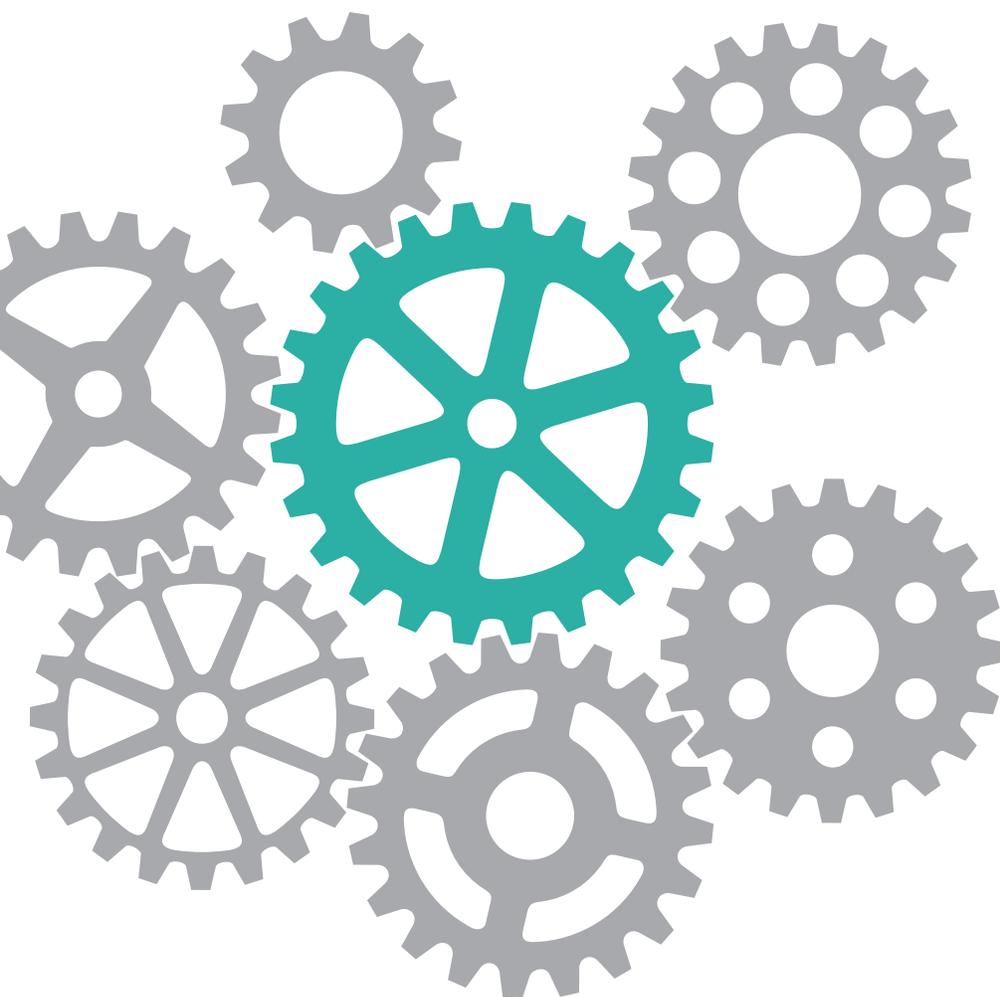
“ Leadership from the Middle can be briefly defined as: a deliberate strategy that increases the capacity and internal coherence of the middle as it becomes a more effective partner upward to the state and downward to its schools and communities, in pursuit of greater system performance.

ways the Ontario strategy was led from the top (the government), and although it did contain many strong partnership ideas, it ultimately will not be embedded enough to establish sustainable system change (see the discussion of New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (NPDL) and Ontario below). Similarly, bottom-up change (e.g., school autonomy) does not result in overall system improvement; some schools improve, others don’t and the gap between high and low performers grows wider.

The key question, then, is how can we achieve the strongest system coherence, capacity and commitment resulting in sustained improvement?

Leadership from the Middle can be briefly defined as: a deliberate strategy that increases the capacity and internal coherence of the middle as it becomes a more effective partner upward to the state and downward to its schools and communities, in pursuit of greater system performance. The goal of LftM is to develop greater overall system coherence by strengthening the focus of the middle in relation to system goals and local needs. Thus, it is not a standalone, but rather a connected strategy. This approach is powerful because it mobilizes the middle (districts and/or networks of schools), thus developing widespread capacity, while at the same time the middle works with its schools more effectively and becomes a better and more influential partner upward to the center.

The LftM strategy is being used in several systems around the world, and my colleagues and I are currently involved in initiatives in California (districts working with each other on system goals), Connecticut (districts working in cohorts), and Quebec (again districts working together on local and province-wide priorities). For this article I will draw on two examples: one from the relatively decentralized system of New Zealand; the other from the relatively centralized province of Ontario.



SYSTEM CHANGE IN NEW ZEALAND

In 1989, New Zealand passed a radical (at the time) piece of legislation entitled Tomorrow's Schools that abolished regional authority and created individual school autonomy, with each school having its own school council. Assessing its impact is beyond the scope of this article, but we can say that by and large, improved performance of the overall system did not ensue (for example, the gap between high- and low-performance schools increased). In 2014, the current government passed another initiative, called Investing in Education Success, that provided a substantial new budget of 369 million NZ dollars in order to set up networks of schools that would work together to leverage improvement. There are some 2,500 schools in New Zealand; it was expected that all schools would participate in networks of 5-20 schools. Initially the proposal was imposed on the system and was greeted with widespread opposition.

Over the past year and a half, the system has worked on a resolution that I would essentially call an LftM solution. For example, the government and the primary school teachers'/principals' federations worked out guidelines in something called the "Joint Initiative." Here are its five fundamental principles:

- 1. Children are at the centre of a smooth and seamless whole of educational pathways, from earliest learning to tertiary options.**
- 2. Parents who are informed and engaged are involved in their children's education and part of a community with high expectations for and of those children.**
- 3. Teachers and education leaders, supported by their own professional learning and growth, and those of their colleagues, will**

systematically collaborate to improve educational achievement outcomes for their students.

- 4. Teachers and education leaders will be able to report measurable gain in the specific learning and achievement challenges of their students.**
- 5. Teachers and leaders will grow the capability and status of the profession within clearly defined career pathways for development and advancement.**

Within these overarching principles, New Zealand is working out additional requirements to guide the work of emerging networks. These guidelines are consistent with eight criteria that Santiago Rincon-Gallardo and I formulated in relation to LftM networks of schools or districts. We have identified eight essential ingredients of effective networks:

- 1. Developing high-trust relationships**
- 2. Focusing on ambitious student learning goals linked to measurable outcomes**
- 3. Continuously improving instructional practice**
- 4. Using deliberate leadership and skilled facilitation**
- 5. Frequently interacting and learning inwards**
- 6. Connecting outward to learn from others**
- 7. Forming new partnerships among students, teachers and families**
- 8. Securing adequate resources to sustain the work.**

It is too early to assess the impact of New Zealand's LftM strategy, but it does provide a clear example of deliberately trying to mobilize the middle for system success. ■

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FRAMEWORKS FOR P



Dr. Louis Gates
Superintendent,
Columbia School District



Ian Yale
Principal,
Columbia Elementary
School



Kyle Miller
Principal,
Columbia High School

“How can schools consistently build basic knowledge and skills (which is the beginning of any journey toward deeper learning) and foster the kind of open-ended problem-solving and creative thinking that is the hallmark of powerful learning at its best?” asked Metha and Fine (2014, p. 8) in the “Harvard Education Letter.” They added, “We saw schools and classrooms that had made headway toward each of these things, but rarely did we see places where they were fused together.” The question posed by Metha and Fine relates most closely to content within the three broad school-related frameworks: (1) teaching and learning; (2) content; and (3) core support.

As school administrators, we wrestled with the same content dilemma: How could we meld the learning of basic knowledge and skills with powerful student learning? With suggestions and backing from our staff and school board, we designed a content learning triad for concurrent mastery of (1) automaticity; (2) subject, and (3) integrated learning.

“As school administrators, we wrestled with the same content dilemma: How could we meld the learning of basic knowledge and skills with powerful student learning?”

For these we coined the acronym ASIL. Below we discuss this content framework and weave its components into an interrelated student learning framework that nurtures powerful learning.

AUTOMATICITY LEARNING

Clearly, students must master the three gateway automaticities — reading, math fact, and writing — to efficiently engage in subject and integrated learning. Following, we discuss the facilitation of these automaticities, the first part of our content triad.

READING AUTOMATICITY

The National Reading Panel identified five components of reading instruction — phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Rasinski (2012) rightly separated fluent reading into two parts: reading automaticity and prosaic reading.

Using this differentiation, vocabulary, comprehension, and prosaic reading fall within subject and integrated learning; whereas phonemic awareness and phonics undergird reading automaticity. Gates and

Yale (2011) describe an exhaustive study of a children’s list of 16,928 words that represent 86,745 discrete phonic cells. They neatly segmented these phonic cells into one of five comprehensive categories — Single Vowels, Final-Single Vowel-Consonant-e, Vowel Digraphs, Single Consonants and Consonant Di-trigraphs — and created five phonic generalizations that range from 91 percent to 99 percent transparency.

Apart from the 11 categories of unfit phonic cells (the single vowel **o** accounted for over 78 percent or 3054 of the 3895 unfit cells), the generalizations describe a highly predictable, scientific decoding system that consists of 54 basic phonic cell patterns (**cat**, **see**, **ship**) and 39 phonogram patterns (**ball**, **night**, **book**). As showcased above, the authors highlight the simplest possible pattern words to teach the phonic cells and phonograms. To foster reading automaticity, they also stress textual reading and encourage syllabication practice and repeated reading as needed.

MATH FACT AUTOMATICITY

Like the separation of reading comprehension from reading automaticity, our framework isolates the study of mathematics from math fact automaticity. Research by Price, Mazzocco, & Ansari (2013)

AUTOMATICITY SUBJECT

POWERFUL LEARNING

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Planning with Data, Aligning Curriculum, Improving Instruction, Closing the Gap

demonstrates that students who know math facts score better in general mathematics as measured by the Preliminary Scholastic Attitude Test.

We emphasize addition and multiplication math fact automaticity. We also simplify the seemingly endless list of single digit math to the following Essential 28 that, by changing the sign, becomes effective for learning addition and multiplication facts alike:

- 3+3; 4+3; 5+3; 6+3; 7+3; 8+3; 9+3
- 4+4; 5+4; 6+4; 7+4; 8+4; 9+4
- 5+5; 6+5; 7+5; 8+5; 9+5
- 6+6; 7+6; 8+6; 9+6
- 7+7; 8+7; 9+7
- 8+8; 9+8
- 9+9

While introducing the Essential 28, we emphasize the subsequent basic number concepts: the simplicity of adding 1 or 2 to any number; the zero property for multiplication (any number times 0 is 0); the identity property for addition and multiplication (0 added to or 1 multiplied by any number equals that number); doubling a number is the same as multiplying the number times 2 ($6 + 6 = 6 \times 2$); and inverses ($3 + 5 = 5 + 3$; $3 \times 5 = 5 \times 3$).

The Essential 28 includes numerous addition fact patterns. For example,

“ Like the separation of reading comprehension from reading automaticity, our framework isolates the study of mathematics from math fact automaticity.

since the 10s pattern is 0-back (the pattern for $10 + 4$ is simply to add 10 and 4 for the sum of 14), the 9s pattern is 1-back (the $9 + 4$ pattern is 1-back from 4 is 3 for the sum of 13). Many students also easily see the 2-back pattern for the 8s (the $8 + 4$ pattern is 2-back from 4 is 2 for the sum of 12) and some see the 3-back pattern for the 7s (the $7 + 4$ pattern is 3-back from 4 is 1 for the sum of 11). The Essential 28 also includes the neighbor pattern (the sum of $6 + 5$ is one more than the sum of $5 + 5$) and “tweener” patterns (the sum of $6 + 4$ is the same as doubling the in-between number 5).

Comparably, multiplication fact patterns for the Essential 28 include the 5s pattern (the product of 5 times an even number and 5 times an odd number ends in 0 and 5 respectively), the pattern for 6s by evens (6 times an even number ends in the last digit of that number: $6 \times 4 = 24$), and the magic 9s pattern (for 9×4 , think $4 - 1 = 3$ and $3 + 6$, compressed to

36 , equals magic 9). The charming YouTube video titled “Multiplication Memorization (and Why It’s Not so Hard), for example, offers these and other simplified multiplication fact patterns for the Essential 28. In short, condense the facts to the Essential 28 then ease memorization by teaching math fact patterns such as those shown above and found in web searches.

WRITING AUTOMATICITY

Writing automaticity lacks the laser-like research that supports teaching reading and math fact automaticity. Nonetheless, the selection of a writing automaticity model provides an essential common language of writing instruction which promotes shared writing purposes. From numerous options, we selected the five-part writing model to introduce writing automaticity. Clearly, the use of this writing framework for all writing exercises would lead to impossibly narrow, tedious writing; this is not the intent. Rather, the selection of this model introduces students to one coherent writing framework. (Interestingly, Lincoln wrote the remarkable Gettysburg Address with a gripping prologue and he ended his address with five powerful sentences brilliantly crafted in what we know today as the five-part writing form.) Using this five-part model, our primary students learn to write a five-sentence paragraph in which the first sentence

Continued on page 14

INTEGRATED LEARNING

introduces the topic, the next trio of sentences adds detail to support the topic, and the concluding sentence summarizes the theme.

We couple the instruction of writing model with basic writing conventions. At the primary level, our students learn to write simple sentences that begin with a capital letter and end with proper punctuation and progress toward writing increasingly complex sentences and grammatical styles. By expanding the five sentences into five paragraphs, we also introduce students to a simple five-part short essay framework. As they mature, the students move from the five-part writing model to learning a myriad of writing frameworks and styles taught within subject and integrated learning.

Modern science reveals that learning patterns and mastering automaticities creates neural pathways — observable physical changes in the brain. More precisely, Willis, a board-certified neurologist, public school teacher, and education professor, notes, “We already know that rote memory is inefficient, but now there is visible evidence [including building of neural connections as shown by functional magnetic resonance imaging — fMRI] to encourage helping students make connections and see patterns.” Furthermore, she states that “Whenever new material is presented in such a way that students see relationships, they generate greater brain cell activity (forming new neural connections) and achieve more successful long-term memory storage and retrieval” (Willis, 2006, p. 15). Lastly, mastery of the three automaticities frees students to more fully engage in subject and integrated learning.

SUBJECT LEARNING

In the nineteenth century, the philosopher, Spencer, asked the classic question, “What knowledge is of most worth?” Metha and Fine (Ibid., p. 7) suggest that the

lack of a “corpus of disciplinary knowledge” endures and continues to shroud boundary delineations between subjects and highlights the complexity of defining subject learning. While we acknowledge these philosophical and practical barriers, schools must classify subject learning as a prerequisite for the development of standards and a *common language for subject instruction*. To this end, we grouped our fields of study into seven broad areas — (1) Career and Technical Education, (2) Language Arts, (3) The Arts, (4) Science, (5) Social Studies, (6), Mathematics, and (7), Physical Education/Health. We coined the acronym CLASS MaP to easily remember and organize these fields. To hone our common language of instruction, we adopted Marzano’s recommendation (2004) and identified up to 30 essential terms for the subjects taught in each grade level and for all standalone courses. This simple but straightforward process weaves the horizontal and vertical content fabric from prekindergarten through senior high school. We dubbed these Content Terms or simply C-Terms and, with a spreadsheet, we sort and revise our terms with relative ease. Moreover, each field of study spirals from its basic vocabulary and core standards toward deeper subject learning. As it deepens, subject lines blur and integrate into multiple fields of study, the final part of our content triad.

INTEGRATED LEARNING

Integrated learning models vary from casual connections between two subjects to formal marriages between multiple subjects, such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), adding the Arts to STEM for STEAM, Project-Based Learning, and Humanities. Integrated learning promotes rigorous thinking skills. Bloom and his team classified a cognitive learning framework into an array that spans from the rudimentary levels of remember and understand to rigorous intellectual

challenges found in application, analysis, evaluation, and creation — the modernized term for synthesis. A web search provides a host of Bloom’s Taxonomy Question and Task Design Wheels. These wheels assist teachers in the development of lessons that help catapult students into countless open-ended and cognitively differentiated questions and learning tasks which bridge the gamut of Bloom’s taxonomy. Later, Costa reorganized Bloom’s taxonomy into three levels of questions: (1) Text Explicit Questions, (2) Text Implicit Questions, and (3) Experience-Based Questions. The experience-based questions, in particular, allow students to concurrently work toward mastery of the ASIL automaticities, learn foundation subject standards, and engage in deeper subject and integrated learning.

“ Lastly, mastery of the three automaticities frees students to more fully engage in subject and integrated learning.

Finally, Willis (Ibid., p. 75) stated that, “When information is processed and stored in relational patterns, it is accessible for retrieval from multiple cues. That means that there are multiple ways to access the stored memories...” This suggests that deeper and more powerful learning occurs from integrating the concepts drawn from the academic disciplines variously stored throughout the brain.

ASIL, Teaching/Learning, and Support — The Unified Instructional Core

To leverage meaningful student engagement, couple ASIL with a quality paradigm for teaching/learning. Unlike the ASIL multidirectional content framework — students may actively engage in

deepening subject and integrated learning activities while mastering the basic automaticities — the archetype teaching/learning framework includes the cyclic lesson parts of plan, teach/learn, and monitor/adjust. Lastly, successful schools require core support: non-instructional staff, financial, facility/equipment, and family/community support. For shared common language purposes, we introduced this trio of frameworks: 1) teaching/learning, (2) ASIL, and (3) core support — as the Unified Instructional Core.

We close by recasting Metha and Fine’s opening question into a declarative statement: The ASIL framework, coupled with a proper application of a powerful teaching/learning model and core support, provides schools with a powerful yet practical tools that teachers may skillfully weave to “consistently build basic knowledge and skills... and foster the kind of open-ended problem solving and creative thinking that is the hallmark of powerful learning at its best.” ■

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CALLED TO ZAMBIA

One Principal's Personal and Professional Journey



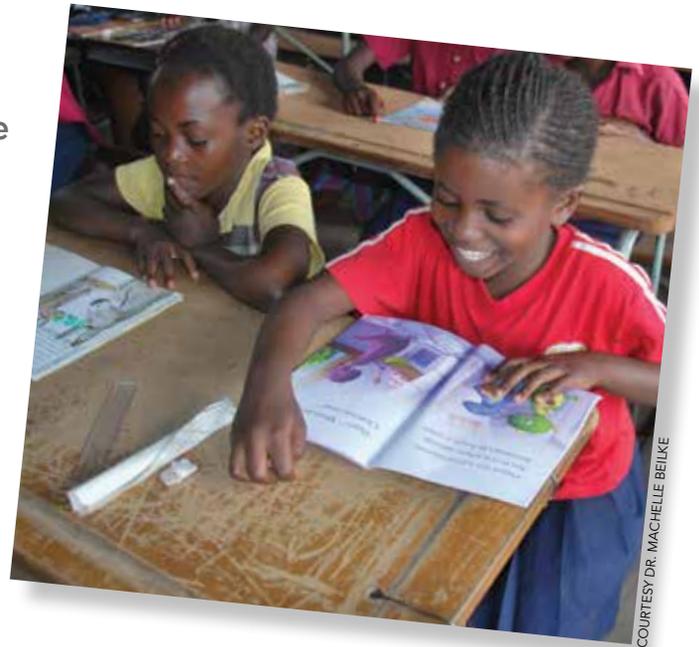
Dr. Machel Beilke and her husband, Bob, pose with students, teachers and members of the village and Church of Central African Presbyterian (CCAP).

Dr. Machel Beilke
AWSP Associate Member

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Ensuring School Safety, Planning with Data, Aligning Curriculum, Improving Instruction, Managing Resources, Engaging Communities, Closing the Gap

As principals, our days are consumed with thoughts about the learning and emotional needs of particular students, supplying more resources to teachers, providing relevant feedback after an observation, increasing standardized test scores, choosing the correct words to calm an angry parent waiting in the office, and checking off the many items remaining on our “to do” lists. We expend our energies on making a difference in our communities because the principalship is not just a job, it’s a calling. Over the past 10 years, that calling has expanded from my corner of the world in Washington state to parts of Zambia in Africa.



COURTESY DR. MACHELLE BEILKE

These students come after school to read books because they have no books at home.

CALLED TO ZAMBIA

Ten years ago, the Bethel School District awarded me a sabbatical to pursue my doctorate. During that year I made a trip to Africa where I visited community schools in Lusaka, Zambia.

Community schools provide education to children who cannot access government (public) schools because of distance or cost. The teachers volunteer in inadequate facilities, receiving little to no pay, and teach with limited materials, resources and training. It was in these community schools, located in the poorest sections of town, my passion for providing quality education for Zambia’s neediest children began.

I made a few subsequent trips but it wasn’t until 2011 when I was asked by the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) if I could provide training for teachers in their community schools to increase instructional effectiveness and student learning that I could see the impact of my work. My husband, Bob,

“ My husband, a clinical child psychologist, and I used our vacation times to travel to Zambia, observing, interviewing and providing training. Two summers later, I invited other teachers along to help with the training.

was also asked to train caregivers to help meet the emotional needs of the children. With a grant from the Presbyterian Church USA, we began a three-year relationship with the teachers and caregivers of the CCAP who work with more than 4,000 children.

My husband, a clinical child psychologist, and I used our vacation times to travel to Zambia, observing,

interviewing and providing training. Two summers later, I invited other teachers along to help with the training. Although the Zambian teachers really appreciated what they were taught and I could see some of the instructional strategies being implemented, I knew spending extended periods of time coaching and mentoring the teachers rather than providing “sit and get” training would be more effective and self-sustaining. As a full-time principal, this was not possible until now.

Last summer, I resigned from my principal position so I could spend this academic year volunteering as a consultant to the CCAP’s community schools. I spent six weeks this fall visiting schools and performing a needs assessment. I am spending this winter and spring modeling and observing lessons, providing feedback and embedded training. I will also mentor the director of the schools, Mabuchi, so this work can continue beyond this academic year.

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DAILY LIFE IN ZAMBIA

This fall, I divided my time between the capital city of Lusaka, Zambia and rural villages in eastern Zambia. As a “city girl,” the environment in both Lusaka and rural Zambia personally challenged me. Since Zambia relies on the force of its great rivers to supply hydroelectric power to the county, when there is a shortage of rain there is a shortage of electricity.

“ Without receiving a consistent financial incentive teachers will leave their current posts to work in other schools or take other jobs that pay and the students left behind will suffer.

Zambia has experienced an extended drought resulting in a “power shedding” — or rolling blackouts — in Lusaka. Life revolves around the power schedule, which the power company posts on their website. The time varies depending on the day. It can be during the day, evening or night. The power is generally out for eight hours at a time each day so charging my laptop and phone took a bit of planning ahead. There is also a time every day when the water is turned off causing one to plan ahead before taking a shower, washing dishes or doing laundry. The temperatures reached into the mid-90s each day with little to no relief from heat without electricity to run fans. When the temperatures dropped in the evening we still remained indoors due to the increase in mosquitoes that carry malaria.

Life in rural Zambia also has its challenges. Besides the power shortages, simple conveniences

such as finding a cup of coffee, a flushing toilet, hot and cold running water, or a spider/cockroach-free bedroom can be a challenge. Yet in spite of the lack of comforts, I find the interaction with my Zambian colleagues rewarding and worth the inconvenience.

TEACHER TRAINING

In addition to the inconveniences of day-to-day living in a developing country, I realized larger challenges exist for the community schools that I will work with in the coming months. Of the teachers who received training from my colleagues and me since 2011, only 30 percent remain in the schools. The others have moved to other schools or jobs where the pay is better. Seventy percent of the current teachers have only had one

training session and 63 percent of those teachers received their training in the past six months. Therefore, the majority of the teaching force is inexperienced.

It pleased me to find half the teachers who have received more than one training over the years are still implementing instructional strategies I taught them. After visiting 22 schools and conversing with 46 teachers, I confirmed what I had previously thought: Sustainability is key. Without receiving a consistent financial incentive teachers will leave their current posts to work in other schools or take other jobs that pay and the students left behind will suffer. Additionally, a more sustainable professional development model is needed to ensure effective instructional practices are maintained.



Seventh-grade students work to find the main idea and details in a passage about the water cycle.



TEACHER OBSERVATIONS: An upper-level teacher reviews the day's math lesson on matrices. During the post-observation, Beilke and her colleagues suggested that he pause after asking a question to give students an opportunity to think about their answers.

I am, however, encouraged by the engagement strategies I see implemented. In the classrooms where teachers have received training, I see students discussing and comparing answers, using math manipulatives, acting concepts out, teachers utilizing “wait-time,” and teachers teaching two grade levels at once. In one school, the seventh-grade passing rate has been 100 percent for two years now and the teacher credits my training for this outcome. Some of the teachers who have attended the trainings have shared these strategies with the new teachers.

BEYOND ACADEMICS

A number of students in the community schools are orphaned or have experienced grief and trauma. The loss of a parent, grandparent, sibling or close family member to disease is common. Poverty and the stress of finding adequate food or a safe environment can harm children.

With this in mind, my husband wrote a curriculum for teachers to use with students in an after-school club venue. The manual, “Strengthening Children,” covers basic counseling skills such as listening, reflection and empathy, followed by a series of lessons and activities the teacher uses with the children. Topics include recognizing and self identifying, the six other basic emotions, as well as survivor guilt, understanding the intensity of emotions, managing negative emotions by altering ones actions and thoughts, problem-solving, and each child developing their own trauma narrative. These concepts are taught through games, role plays, stories, drawings and discussions.

Parents are also encouraged to help with homework assignments and attend the Strengthening Children graduation ceremony. In the schools where Strengthening Children is being utilized, teachers

report an increase in attendance, greater academic engagement and improved test scores. When children feel emotionally safe, have greater self-efficacy and receive support, they are better able to concentrate on many areas of life, including school. Unfortunately many of the teachers who were trained to lead Strengthening Children groups have left due to lack of pay and support.

WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

This winter and spring I will concentrate on moving from a one — or two-day workshop model of training to a job-embedded training model here in Zambia. Mabuchi and I will model lessons for teachers and engage in reflective conversations based on the lessons. Teachers will then have opportunities to be observed, reflect and receive feedback on lessons they teach.

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Mabuchi will continue to visit teachers to observe and engage in reflective conversations and make phone calls to encourage teachers in their practice. Additionally, Mabuchi who is a trainer of trainers and has successfully led several Strengthening Children groups, will work closely with teachers to encourage the groups to start up again and continue in every school. Finally, I will work closely with the leadership of CCAP to find income-generating models that could result in teacher pay and retention.

PERSONAL IMPACT

On the surface, schooling in Zambia appears very different from the West. Running water, electricity, books and materials are not present in every school in Zambia as they are here in the U.S. Students and teachers sometimes walk miles to attend school. Teachers in community schools often work without pay. Yet teachers in Zambia desire the same things as teachers in the West. Teachers see education as a way out of poverty for many children. They view their profession as an investment in the future, a way to shape young lives and contribute to society. Both work hard, care deeply, and want to make an impact on the future.

It is my privilege to partner with Zambian teachers to impact the lives of so many children and provide one

For more information about this project and to follow Beilke's experiences with Training Teachers in Zambia, visit her at <http://empoweringzambianteachers.blogspot.com/>. Or, follow her on Facebook ("Training Teachers in Zambia").

means to brighter futures. ■



COURTESY DR. MACHELLE BEILKE

First-grade students begin capturing what they see while drawing a plant from the garden.

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Symptoms vs Causes

Evaluating Approaches to Student Wellness

Daniel Sobel MA Ed
(Psych) FCMi FRSA

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Creating a Culture; Ensuring School Safety;
Planning with Data; Engaging Communities*

I can't imagine there is anyone left in educational leadership who needs to be convinced that student wellness is an essential ingredient to attainment and progress. There is a die-hard group who insist that wellness is important but the domain of other agencies and organizations and that schooling is equipped for teaching only. I think this is broad debate, one that is usually political and even generational — and I am not going to try and win that one here.

I think the interesting, debatable issues lie with how the average school could maximize their impact on student wellness with the limited time and resources that they have. As an educational consultant in the UK and Europe, I specialized in education

inclusion, which means special needs, impoverished students and any mainstream student who may experience a disadvantage of some sort. I am excited to share with my American colleagues some of the best practices and ideas that I have come across on the other side of the pond in England that have enabled wellness to thrive in a way that is not too expensive in money and time.

A NUANCED, PERSONALIZED RESPONSE

Sometime ago, I wrote a column in “The Guardian” about how a school in the northern England city of Sheffield had bought their student a bike because they struggled in maths. I have had schools respond to this

“ I think the interesting, debatable issues lie with how the average school could maximize their impact on student wellness with the limited time and resources that they have.

example by proposing a purchase of 20 bicycles — but this misses the point of how this specific intervention was identified as relevant.

In this particular case, the pupil

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was struggling in math. Instead of immediately putting additional math support in place, the school looked at the cause more carefully. In fact the student was always late to first period — which was math — so he missed vital lesson time. Rather than trying to motivate attendance using rewards or penalties, the school investigated why he was always late. He kept missing his bus because he cared for two younger siblings and found getting out of the house in the morning a struggle.

The school understood that there are two big "nos" that you avoid when meeting the needs of a student like this: 1) don't take away their break times — they really need down time when they are off duty, and the social connections they can make during break are vital and 2) protect their self-esteem — if you put them into a low set or remedial group they will be likely to feel that they are "bad" at that subject.

“ Rather than trying to motivate attendance using rewards or penalties, the school investigated why he was always late. He kept missing his bus because he cared for two younger siblings and found getting out of the house in the morning a struggle.

The reason I herald this as the best case of interventions I have seen is because the school took the opportunity to look beyond what could easily have been the "standard" response to the problem. They spoke to the student, his parents and the supporting social worker and didn't make assumptions about the best way to respond to the presenting issue of poor performance in math. In addition, and equally impressive, the school managed the expectations of the other students who didn't get jealous and demand a bike for themselves. I think when a school can identify the real issue behind the

attainment problems and address that then they will see results.

COMMUNITY BEFORE LEARNING

Of all the school principals I have consulted with, Nathan Atkinson stands out as a pioneer in community engagement. Richmond Hill School is in a particularly low socio-economic area of the northern England city of Leeds. Nathan and his team identified many barriers to learning that are shaped by life outside of the school. The challenge to ensure that children arrive at school ready to learn could be considered to be a combined effort between home and school with the emphasis on home. However, when considering the accountability of schools in terms of academic outcomes for children the balance shifts toward increased efforts from schools to support children and their families in as many ways as possible.

At Richmond Hill, food has been used as medium to help engage with families and the local community. Their research showed that a high percentage of children attend school each day without breaking the fast of the previous day and some even without a drink. Many factors contribute to this; poverty and unconscious neglect being the two most common. An empty stomach affects concentration, energy levels, attentiveness and emotional well-being. Prolonged exposure to lack of food ultimately results in children working below age related expectations. Traditional models of

“ Using food to engage with families has had many positive outcomes. Parents talk to the staff over a coffee, they ask for help, they share worries as well as their laughter.

interventions, designed to support children to catch up and close the attainment gap, can be ineffective if the targeted children continue to present each day at school with empty stomachs.

Atkinson identified an empty learning space in the school which he converted to create a café, this was built to the specification of a high street coffee shop. This space is now used for a wide variety of activities for pupils, their families and the wider community. Nathan worked in partnership with local supermarkets, caterers, independent traders and wholesalers who generate tons of waste food that predominantly heads straight to landfill sites. They were able to intercept waste food products and utilize them within our school based café and have set up a weekly food shop. A wide variety of products have been distributed through this initiative; fruit, vegetables, pastries, cakes, bread, cheese, cooking oil, tinned and jarred products to name a few. This food is then made available to parents and members of the school and wider community on a pay-as-you-feel basis, which ensures that the food is valued and that people have a sense of worth.

Using food to engage with families has had many positive outcomes. Parents talk to the staff over a coffee, they ask for help, they share worries as well as their laughter. As a result of these interactions, they changed two key factors: trust in the school and, as a result, aspiration. This trust

provides the platform for building positive relationships with families which then contribute to more positive outcomes for the students.

BREAKING BREAD

The traditional model of education front-loads key learning during morning sessions, as this is when children are perceived to be at their most productive. With this in mind, they were determined to ensure all 600 children in the school had access to breakfast each morning.

Providing children with food each morning would be costly both financially and in terms of time when the timetable is already beyond capacity. Having identified hunger as a barrier to learning it has been essential to find a sustainable solution. In specific response to this they have been able to intercept large quantities of bread which is past the sell-by date but not their use-by date and was headed for the trash. They provide toast each morning to all pupils (600) using only intercepted breads.

In response to requirements of the local community, the café and food stall are open through term time and school holidays. Families having access to school during the holidays ensures additional support and guidance can be given when required to any families in need. A father who couldn't afford to pay much for food brought in some potatoes that he'd grown in his raised beds in his front yard. Another parent who was burgled and had all possessions stolen has made use of the facility. Another member of the community, although not a parent of a child at school, has been coming to the cafe every time it has been opened; she has just been given leave to stay in the UK but she is not allowed any form of benefit or money. Her son is currently being assessed for autism and she is unable to work. She is living on what she can get from the outlet at school. Another parent who visited for the

first time loved the cafe so much that she volunteered to come in one day a week and help out. These parents who have never met each other before, soon engage in discussions about their lives, their families, their food and have formed new friendships through the cafe.

INCREASED INVOLVEMENT

Education is at the core of their work and the school curriculum has been designed to support children and families develop a deeper understanding of food and its associated nutritional content. All children in school will receive four cooking lessons each year, increasing in complexity as they progress through the school. The school website has a selection of recipes that can be made from the foods available in the café and from the boutique. These recipes can be accessed via QR codes displayed on a world map that also identifies the origins of the food with the café. A kitchen library is being piloted within the café, providing families with utensils and equipment on a free loan basis to further develop confidence in preparing meals with food from school.

Attendance has improved as a result of Atkinson's work, children are keen to come to school and start their day with breakfast and a chat. Parents are more widely involved in school life, at the most recent parent/teacher consultations 90 percent of families attended meetings, this enabled them to share success stories as well as the next steps in learning required for their child.

Many additional learning opportunities are facilitated through children accessing that school café and food stall, such as speaking and listening, numeracy, literacy and social skills are all promoted through the work that children complete within the learning environment either as customers or employees. Student wellness has a broader

impact on students than just physical and emotional health. It may just be a secret door to that gold at the end of the pedagogic rainbow that all educators seek — to shift attitudes, build hope and aspiration. I know too many students who didn't take opportunities that had come their way because ultimately, they weren't used to thinking of school as being a port of call for their nurturing and were too overwhelmed by the mountain of attainments they continuously were set up to fail.

“ Talk about this article with your leadership team and ask yourselves if you are dealing with the symptoms or the causes? ”

FINAL THOUGHTS

I don't think for one moment that this issue is specific to England or America. I have seen it in many countries and I know the solutions are not quick and easy. I wish there was a neatly packaged program that you could purchase that would slot in very neatly to your school system. There isn't. Changing hearts and minds is a process and I have worked with hundreds of schools who have dared to tread that path. So, how can the average school maximize their impact on student wellness with the limited time and resources that they have?

Talk about this article with your leadership team and ask yourselves if you are dealing with the symptoms or the causes? Is your approach based on nuance or general assumptions? How are you navigating the specific needs of your community? ■

EDUCATING A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

Vickiy Van Beek

Director of Diversity Initiatives and Services, AWSP

Adina Brito

Principal, Evergreen Elementary (Shelton Schools)

Roed Freeland

Assistant Principal, Salk Middle (Spokane PS)

Highline’s White Center Heights Elementary (WCH), a PK-6 grade school of approximately 670 students, is located in one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse communities of South Seattle. Its student body reflects this global community, drawing a diverse cross-section of students and families. Nearly 85 percent of students at White Center Heights qualify for free-and-reduced meals.

Anne Reece, now in her fourth year as principal at the school, recently sat down with Washington Principal magazine and members of AWSP’s Diversity and Equity Committee, to talk about how she engages students, families and the community where they live and learn.

ANNE REECE (AR): Our school campus is organized to meet the needs of the kids who live in our neighborhood. We work consistently to understand our neighborhood with its many cultures and we respond in the classroom to systemically meet their needs. We advocate for all our kids, being responsive to meeting their needs and building meaningful relationships with their parents, families, and the community to enhance their school and life success.

WASHINGTON PRINCIPAL (WP): WHAT HAS BEEN THE KEY TO YOUR SUCCESS IN ENGAGING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS?

AR: A number of community groups, nonprofits, and other social agencies are geographically located in this "urban planning" site, which has assisted us in creating partnerships with public institutions and nonprofits.

When I was hired into the principal position, I saw that

partners were meeting regularly but were struggling to get real traction around goals. There were good intentions from the partners but no actionable goals. I realized that nonprofits need schools more and more and the schools need them. They are in position to go after grants but need to work in collaboration with schools to bring their expertise to the table while supporting students and their families. The community partners have the expertise

to write the grants, they need schools to compliment community programs — so it’s a win-win situation!

Another key for success is that the Highline School District is very supportive, from a district perspective, and has leadership for prioritizing family engagement through community partnerships. They employ full time staff at the district level to help schools make connections.

In addition, White Center Heights has a Family Success Partner (FSP) — a staff member from White Center Community Development Association (WCCDA) — who works full time in the school. The FSP organizes and helps families access resources when a family is in need. They also organize a monthly family meeting with the principal to discuss and answer questions related to all aspects of schooling and parenting. At a recent monthly meeting, I was able to discuss and clarify the roles and expectations for parents related to the upcoming student report card conferences.

The key to our success has been finding mutual goals where the school and the community organization’s missions align. For example, the KCHA has the goal that children in their housing will have good attendance at school as it leads to success. So does the WCCDA, and so does the school. Recently we have been piloting a program to

“ The voice of our underrepresented students and families sometimes gets lost in diverse, low socio-economic schools. We want all voices to be heard.”

Anne Reece, Principal, White Center Heights Elementary

One school's effort to engage students, families and community partners



EDITOR'S NOTE: Editor's Note: Last year, the AWSP Diversity and Equity Committee outlined themes it wanted to explore in upcoming issues of Washington Principal. This column explores one of those themes, community and family engagement, based on an interview with White Center Heights Elementary Principal Anne Reece.

improve attendance through positive supports for families. We meet as a community team and with other community partners (such as NAVOS Mental Health Services and Southwest Youth and Family Services) and we invite parents to a workshop and address their family needs in the moment. It has been powerful to link families to community organizations that can support them.

WP: WHAT STRUCTURES OR FORMATS HAVE YOU USED MOST SUCCESSFULLY TO CONNECT WITH PARENTS, GATHER FEEDBACK AND ENCOURAGE PARENT LEADERSHIP?

AR: As many schools do, we hold Monthly Family Nights in literacy and math as part of the Title 1 requirements.

As a starting point, an early survey was administered to determine what parents were most interested in. The number one response was discipline. Traditional Family Night Events are divided into thirds with one-third of the topic focus on literacy/math/health and fitness, one-third on the School Improvement Plan, and the remaining are based on families' interests.

Some of the topics for Family Nights have been:

- Understanding Mathematics
- Town Hall Meetings
- Bullying (led to a survey)
- Discipline
- Multicultural Celebrations

We have a Community Room that is open for an hour every morning. It is in a classroom where parents can drop in, talk and have coffee with staff. I staff the community room with my bilingual para-educators who are my Family Engagement paras. My parents like this because it removes the language barrier they feel at school. I split up the Family Engagement para time so I have both Somali and Spanish-speaking paras in the Community Room, but I still need a Vietnamese-speaking para to be there. I just found out WCCDA is providing an FSP on Monday mornings so

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Ensuring School Safety, Planning With Data, Aligning Curriculum, Improving Instruction, Managing Resources, Engaging Communities, Closing the Gap

that should help. In addition to answering basic questions, we discuss how their children are doing and what their children are learning. The para-educators help me build relationships with the families. They let me know if there is

EDUCATING SCHOLARS FOR A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

Hispanic: 31.9%

Asian: 25.2%

Black: 23.1%

White: 11.1%

Multi-racial: 4.7%

Pacific Islander: 3.3%

American Indian/Alaskan Native: .7%

a problem if the parent does not speak English.

The voice of our underrepresented students and families sometimes gets lost in diverse, low socio-economic schools. At WCH, we want all voices to be heard. We strive to get better at serving high needs and low socio-economic students in part by relying on school-based initiatives such as improving and personalizing instruction, but we must also empower the parents to be able to be actively involved. You can't get families in to advocate for themselves on their own: You need community support. The Community Room where I have my bilingual paras, the WCCDA Family Success Partners, and my GLEA advocate, provide a consistent forum for listening to families. I stay ahead of concerns and needs through this forum.

We implemented **Town Hall Meetings and Surveys**, as additional avenues to gather and respond to parent requests. Bilingual staff are a priority at the town hall meetings and any survey development work to ensure language isn't a barrier. From one survey, we learned

Continued on page 26

that parents wanted more homework assigned because it helped to keep kids at home and off the street. Homework for academic gains was the secondary reason for them. Homework feedback was always been a negative coming from parents. Families struggled to help their children with homework and children had negative consequences in the classroom when they didn't do it. So in response to the parents' desire, we met as a staff and got clear about what the children need to do for homework that would not pull teacher time and school resources so much. I presented the concept of a Homework Journal at the Open House in the fall to get parent approval.

We implemented the **Homework Journal** strategy, which we also have prioritized as one of our academic goals. Daily, all students attending WCH are expected to: 1) read, 2) write about their reading, 3) do a math problem, and 4) do some type of physical activity. Each student is expected to record their responses to each of the four in their journal each day. The WCH staff developed a matrix for grades 1-6 that defines what is expected in each of the four areas for each grade level and the matrix is in the front of the journal. The time spent doing homework each night is more for a sixth-grader than a kindergarten student. All students, families, and staff know that this is the strategy we have and it is a daily expectation. We have communicated this expectation to all of our families through multiple means. Our afterschool programs are also aware of the journal strategy. This keeps students accountable to do some type of homework even if they don't bring their journal home or to the afterschool program. Our community providers appreciate knowing what needs to be done even if a student "forgets" his/her homework. This initiative resulted in students gaining better study skills while we met parents' needs. There are no excuses now — it's on the student and families to get the homework done. They know the expectations and the expectations are always the same. Parents are no longer judging teachers on homework. Students at WCH have breakfast in their classrooms; teachers check the Homework Journals but don't grade them. Some collect the journals now and then and determine teaching points.

I also hold a **Monthly Chat with the Principal** for families through a parent coffee hour that WCCDA organizes. This month the learning goal for our parents was to gain understanding and the skills needed to navigate the upcoming student led conferences. Topics for the monthly chats are influenced by parent requests in addition to topics staff may have noticed need attention.

Second- and third-graders are tutored by high school students in reading after school at the **Club Read Program**. This program is held at the local Boys & Girls Club. The program is modeled after Team Read, but tailored to meet the needs of White Center Heights students. KCHA helps to fund the partnership in doing this program.

WP: WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS WHEN DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS THAT ENGAGE FAMILIES? HOW DO YOU COMMUNICATE THIS PRIORITY WITH STAFF?

AR: All staff at WCH prioritize what our students can do. They really know and understand our families' strengths and challenges. They use this knowledge as a resource. When partnership opportunities related to family engagement present themselves or staff have a request, the idea is collectively researched. We will only partner on grant opportunities when the opportunity meets an identified need of our students, families, and/or staff.

The following are the focus of my partnerships and collaborative grant writing and I believe they are essential to success:

- Partners must have a team approach to the work.
- The work must be research-based.
- Community partners school staff work together to develop a model to fit the WCH community.
- Whenever possible, we visit a successful model with community partners and adapt it to make it ours.
- We monitor the implementation of programs with our community partners.
- We assess and revise when needed.

As we proceed along this successful journey of engaging families and partnering with community organizations, we have found that it's essential to employ a certified teacher to drive and lead community partner programs in the school and community. Certified teachers can bridge the gap between classrooms teachers and the community partners in ways that non-certified staff or community partner staff cannot. It reduces the need for teacher meetings and ensures the academic and social needs of students as understood by teachers is driving our programs.

WP: WHAT ARE SOME CHALLENGES, STRATEGIES, OR SUCCESS STORIES YOU HAVE TO SHARE WITH US? WHAT DO YOU WANT US TO KNOW ABOUT THE CHALLENGES YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED?

AR: We have had lots of success related to engaging our families and community partners but that also comes with a few challenges along the way. One issue we've had to tackle is chronic attendance problems. Working together with school staff, KCHA, and WCCDA Family Success Partners, we've developed a positive intervention based on a workshop and family support model. To see if it would work, we initially identified 12 children who were demonstrating attendance challenges. We invited the parents of these students in and KCHA offered them a \$20 gift certificate as an incentive to get them to the

meeting. We presented the parents with positive reasons/information related to why we wanted and needed their children in school every day. We were intentional about keeping the meeting positive.

In another room, we assembled community partners that could provide support services. We had NAVOS, a mental health agency, SWYFS, a community support organization and others. We did this so partners could help address issues the student or the family may have been going through. After a short presentation, we met with each family individually and talked about the reason for the chronic absenteeism. As support was needed we called on the different community partners who joined in on the conversation and signed up families for services right in the moment. This was a powerful way to help solve some of the challenges the families were experiencing which was contributing to the student's absenteeism. We have done one more workshop and we are seeing improvement in attendance for these students. Based on prior experience I knew that absenteeism is complex and I have so many students, but with the community partner support, I feel we can get access to these families better and provide support faster using this model.

It is a constant challenge to have parents participate in school events regularly. Parents have multiple jobs and many feel that they don't have the confidence in typical ways perhaps found in a "middle class" school. Some don't speak English and may have other barriers. I would love to start a classroom volunteer network, and have looked at the Chicago model, which is community-based and prioritizes building confidence in parents by developing parents as tutors. Parents at White Center Heights volunteer to chaperone on field trips. They don't feel confident to volunteer in classrooms, but it would be a great place to focus some community partnership work.

WP: HOW DO YOU MEASURE SUCCESS RELATED TO COMMUNITY AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT?

Attendance at family/parent events is one of the metrics we use to determine if we are being effective with our family partnership initiatives. Attendance rates of our students are an easy and appropriate measure for the attendance family-community-school partnership initiative.

Another family-school partnership initiative is around reading. We have a community reading goal of 80 percent of our students meeting standard by third grade. Our community partners have committed to 60 minutes of reading with their students, especially over the summer, and this reduces reading loss. We consistently monitor reading progress of all of our students and work out how our different school and community programs can better support their growth.

White Center Heights relies on a variety of community partnerships to serve students and their families. This includes:

- King County Housing Authority
- White Center Community Development Association
- Southwest Youth and Family Services
- WIC
- Southwest Boys & Girls Club
- Educare
- Arts Corps
- University of Washington
- Head Start
- NAVOS Counseling

WP: WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO YOUR COLLEAGUES WHO ARE ALSO TRYING TO BETTER ENGAGE FAMILIES AND THEIR COMMUNITY?

AR: I think many principals are trying innovative strategies to get families into their school and to build relationships with them. We need to share more of these strategies. Addressing the language barrier is a good place to start to build those relationships. We need to invest in bilingual paras who can be available to connect with families on a social level first and then build on those relationships to address school and family needs.

I also think the work I have done with my community partners has been extremely beneficial for us all — families, students, school staff, and our community partners. I would advise other principals to seek out other organizations in your neighborhood. They are everywhere and they need you as much as you need them. It has taken me hours of meetings to get where we are but it has strengthened my school in ways I could not do without them. So while it takes time and energy it is well worth sitting down with them and finding out what their mission is and seeing where you align. Even if you start with one organization, it will help you to get an idea of the possibilities. Work with the partner to figure out what you can do with existing funding and what you could do with additional funding. Then work with them to work out plans. Community organizations have the expertise to seek out grants in ways we in schools cannot. We need to capitalize on their strengths. My community partners expand the potential of my school to meet the needs of my students and families. With them, I have deepened my understanding of the potential of family engagement and the power of a community approach to schooling. ■

BUILDING TRUST TO DEVELOP BUILDING TRUST



Tavis M. Peterson, M. Ed.

Principal, Adams Elementary
Wapato SD

TRUST

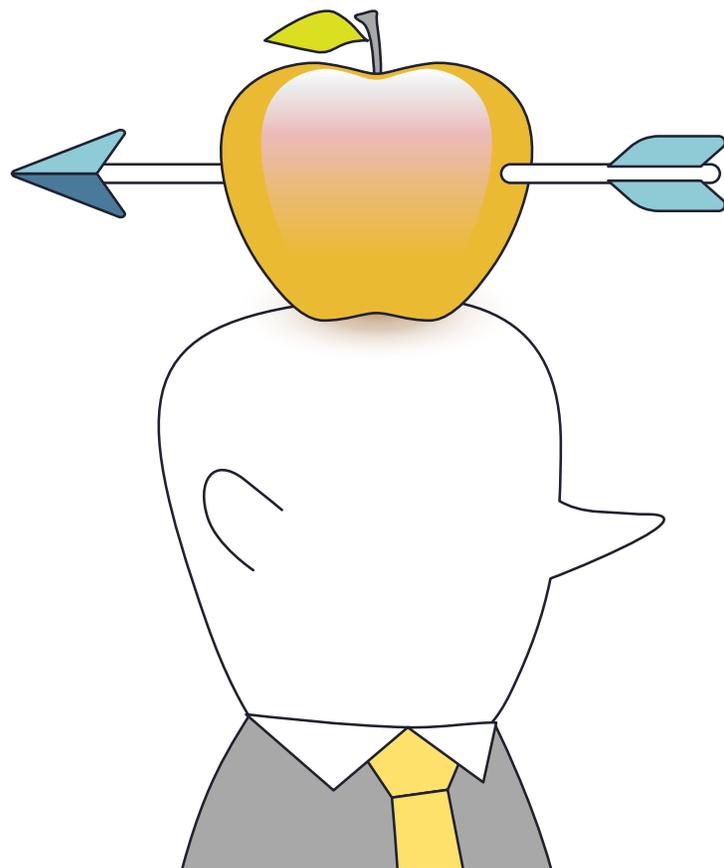
is the fuel that will power your building's ability to persevere. Trust is the foundation of the work we lead and will make or break your tenure. The importance of trust cannot be overstated.

As a building principal, you are responsible for creating a culture that includes a high level of trust. Principals are not only charged with developing trusting relationships with staff members and stakeholders, but also fostering trusting relationships amongst staff members and stakeholders. Trust does not manifest itself in an isolated office, it is constantly ebbing and flowing throughout every interaction that occurs during the year in your school community.

Building principals will benefit from first dissecting the concept of trust and studying its individual parts to ensure any action plan that is developed will be comprehensive. The

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Ensuring School Safety, Planning with Data, Managing Resources, Engaging Communities



Center for Educational Effectiveness defines trust in their Educational Effectiveness Survey by using five separate constructs. These constructs include integrity, benevolence/caring, openness, reliability, and competence. The book, "Trust Matters," echoes this breakdown of trust and provides examples of each construct.

While understanding the definition of trust is critical, the savvy building leader will also work to develop an understanding of how trust is developed, perceived, and maintained within his building. Understanding the different processes involved with developing trust, promoting a strong perception of trust, and building

a structure to maintain existing trust is extremely important. The development of these three steps in establishing trust are intertwined. However, the development of trust does not automatically compute to a stronger perception of trust amongst staff and stakeholders. The building principal must publicize the development of trust constructs in a factual and ongoing manner to all stakeholders. This will keep stakeholders informed, which should create awareness and strengthen perception if the trust constructs are truly becoming stronger. The building principal must then help her building repeat and create behaviors that support the maintenance of existing trust.

Examples of Principal Behaviors that May Strengthen Trust

- **Notes of recognition, gratitude, and encouragement.**
- **Weekly face-to-face conversations with all staff members that go beyond work related topics.**
- **Demonstrate transparency in decision making.**
- **Provide a variety of communication vehicles for staff input, feedback, and notification.**

The action planning that a principal will undertake to develop more trust within his building must be intentional. Building principals must take concrete steps in creating an action plan to genuinely strengthen trust in their school community, their stakeholder's perceptions, and facilitate ongoing maintenance of trust. This intentional planning will include an assessment of trust, identification of key stakeholders, support from staff, periodic assessment updates, ongoing training for stakeholders, transparency, intentional activities to address deficits, and timelines.

The development of trust within a building should be looked upon as a living entity that must be nurtured on a continuous basis. There really is not an endpoint for developing trust. Building principals will benefit from engaging in this work for the following three distinct reasons:

1. Developing trust and strengthening the perception of trust in your building will help your school community realize its potential.
2. As you begin to intentionally facilitate the development of trust, you will begin building skills to help your staff address situations of mistrust in the future.
3. The development of the trust constructs will increase the level of professionalism amongst your staff.

In closing, the development of trust within a school community is key to academic and emotional growth. As building principals work to genuinely

develop the constructs that help define trust, they must also publicize discernible growth in each construct so that the perception of trust within the school community is congruent with the development of the trust constructs. There are many benefits to developing higher levels of trust within a school community and all tangible gains should be celebrated. At the same time, building principals are encouraged to remember that this work should not occur during a "spot in time," rather, this work should become part of an ongoing system for developing and sustaining trust. ■

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Chewelah Peak Learning Center Serves All

Martin E. Fortin, Jr.
Director of Learning Centers

From a listener savoring a note of the Spokane Symphony in the acoustically charming Chewelah Peak Grand Lodge, to the wonder of a fifth-grade student identifying wild flowers on a nature trail, to a high school volleyball player discovering the essence of teamwork on the challenge course, the Chewelah Peak Learning Center serves a variety of groups throughout the year.

Chewelah Peak first began as a vision of Spokane-area principal Ralph Larsen who saw a need for more opportunities for students in eastern Washington. Through

research and informal discussions with many organizations and individuals throughout the Spokane area and the Inland Northwest, they found interest and support for the creation of a residential learning center for outdoor science and leadership education. Thanks to the hard work of Ralph and his colleague Bill Reuter, AWSP and its foundation set out to find a site for another Principals' Learning Center to serve students from highly diverse populations of the surrounding



Students of all ages make outdoor discoveries at Chewelah Peak.

counties of eastern Washington. (Cispus, the other learning center, is in the forest on the western slopes of the Cascades in the triangle formed by Mt. St. Helens, Mt. Rainier, and Mt. Adams.)

After many years and investigating more than 18 potential sites, the decision was made to develop the center 11 miles from the Town of Chewelah across from the 49° North Ski Area. It was dedicated on Sept. 13, 2003, as the Chewelah Peak Learning Center under the leadership of then-AWSP President Gary Kipp.

“ Chewelah Peak first began as a vision of Spokane-area principal Ralph Larsen who saw a need for more opportunities for students in eastern Washington.

Nestled in the woods about an hour north of Spokane, Chewelah Peak opened its doors 12 years ago to support outdoor learning and student leadership training for K-12 students in eastern Washington. Additionally, the learning center offers opportunities for higher education institutions, community organizations and family groups. With the addition of another dorm in the spring of 2008, Chewelah Peak can now host 200 guests for overnight accommodations. This year, we will see the addition of another



High school students earn lab science credit on a field walk.

CHEWELAH PEAK LEARNING CENTER

- 2003** Year Chewelah Peak opened
- 48°18'31.35"N, 117°34'13.81"W** Coordinates to Chewelah Peak
- 50** Number of miles north of Spokane on the Flowery Trail Pass
- 20** Number of acres
- 64,000+** Number of annual visitors since opening
- 461,000** Total number of visitors to date
- 1** Number of miles from the 49 Degrees North Ski Hill

building designed for group meeting space. The wide array of meeting areas, classrooms and outdoor gathering areas are all designed to serve both large and small groups.

Chewelah Peak Learning Center continues to grow in number of visitors, programs and facilities. We are continually looking for opportunities to serve principals and their constituents. Today, Chewelah Peak hosts many different groups ranging from elementary school student leaders to high school to clubs to the local civic organizations. Any group with an educational mission is welcome to use our facility to further their mission. Take a virtual tour at awsplearningcenters.org/chewelahpeak or drop-by for a visit. ■



Leadership camp students start the day with a flag-raising ceremony.

WHEN IT COMES TO WELLNESS

What are the Right Questions?



Vincent Perez

Latino Outreach
Coordinator

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Ensuring School Safety,
Engaging Communities

As an educator, my first question is always, “What are the right questions?” Leading with the right questions can create an atmosphere of inclusion whereby all stakeholders are invited to seek answers together. Answers to well-crafted and well-timed questions can affirm and honor that which is already working, celebrate the life-giving power of our relationships and steer us toward clear strategies.

WHAT IS WELLNESS?

In this article, I will wander through a few questions on wellness in schools using an equity lens, trauma-informed perspectives and my general curiosities. First, what is wellness? I went to dictionary.com for that answer:

wellness

[**wel**-nis]

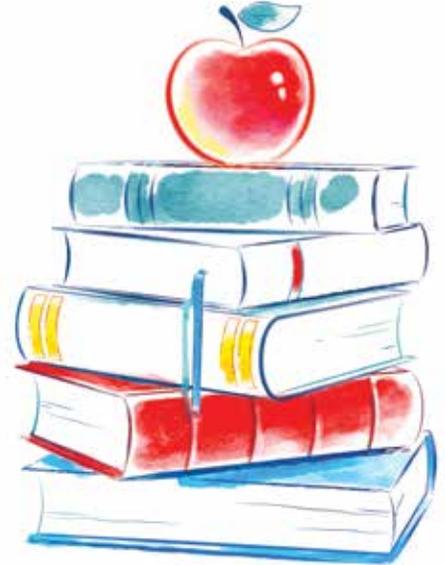
noun

1. *the quality or state of being healthy in body and mind, especially as the result of deliberate effort.*

That last part about deliberate effort leads me to a few how questions. How do we honor healthy practices for our bodies within a school day? How do we quiet or waken our minds? How do students and staff contribute meaningfully to our school environment and community? How are we building our shared living spaces and social networks within our school?

A healthy body and mind for our students, our colleagues and ourselves can seem like a tall order knowing the struggles that many of our students face each day. But that is our charge. And our schools must increasingly respond to systemic issues such as economic, racial, social and linguistic disparities. Schools are among the most important and complex social systems in our culture and are often filled with people experiencing high levels of stress. One of the most resounding messages of a trauma-informed approach is the key principle that *self-care is an ethical imperative*. Our own wellbeing is critical to the quality of our service. The work of wellness begins with our school leaders. How well are you caring for your body, mind and spirit? How are you sleeping? Eating well? Making that yoga/Zumba/spin/salsa class?

A quick throwback to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs is in order. Each preceding need must be met before moving up the pyramid: Physiological, Safety, Love/Belonging, Esteem, and Self-Actualization. The building blocks for wellness start here. Our first priority is the body. From the moment we enter this world we are quickly swaddled and bathed, our tummies filled and bodies held. We engage through a profoundly social world that is experienced first and foremost through our body’s sensations.



Some students enter our schools as their bodies surge with the stress hormone cortisol due to anxiety and fears of bullying. Others are reeling from severe home lives packed with abuse and neglect. Toxic stress rewires the brain to respond through a hyper-aroused state of being, as if a screaming fire alarm were constantly ringing in your head. The bodies charged response in our emotional center (amygdala) overrides all parts of our rational pre-frontal cortex and we interact with others in a hyper-aroused state.

However, there is no fire.

RESET WITH A LEMONHEAD

A variety of input may trigger a fight or flight response in people with trauma histories. Where there is drama, there is trauma. According to Judith Herman in “Trauma and Recovery,” trauma can lead to: alterations in self-perceptions, including a sense of helplessness or paralysis of initiative; shame, guilt, and self-blame; a sense of defilement or stigma; a sense of

complete difference from others (may include sense of specialness, utter aloneness, or belief no other person can understand); and a loss of sustaining faith. People with trauma histories can also develop relationship problems such as a difficulty to establish safe and appropriate boundaries, denigration of self and idealization of others, or dissociative tendencies can make it difficult to form conscious, accurate assessments of danger. The key is to help students find coping skills that allow them to self-soothe and self-regulate.

So, how does one calm down while a piercing alarm is ringing through the body?

A quick trauma-informed intervention that may bring a student into the here and now is the disbursement of a Lemonhead candy. The next time an upset student enters your space, first offer them a Lemonhead. The sour taste awakens us to the present moment. Other answers include rhythmic pattern repetitive motions and mindfulness practices. Rhythmic repetitive patterns that can help us self-soothe include all things music (bobbing head), chewing (gum for testing, overeating), exercise (yoga, running, lifting), beauty rituals (brushing hair, applying makeup), Velcro under desks for students to rub, workout balls for students to sit on (and gently bounce as they choose), lessons taught in song, etc.

Mindfulness practices and meditation, yoga and breathing techniques are among a few practices that calm the body and mind. Mindfulness skills shift one's focus from external stimuli to internal awareness and sort out thoughts, emotions and impulses in a non-reactive way. In short, mindfulness practices can help us focus on the present moment in our body, rather than worrying about the past or the future. Focused awareness, attention and concentration on what is occurring in our body strengthens

the mind-body connection allowing us to listen to our physiology and release tension, stress and pain. It is said that people can never get better without knowing what they know and feeling what they feel.

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR WELLNESS

What are the basic building blocks for wellness? My answer to this question aligns squarely with Maslow: safety, belonging and dignity. The Association of Washington Student Leaders has long used a lesson that aligns Maslow's model with schools. Student leaders are invited to ask the following questions around physiological and safety needs: What projects do you do within your school to support families in need of food or shelter? Is your school environment safe (physically, socially, emotionally, intellectually)? Do students feel safe from being humiliated? How do we help students to speak freely without fear of retribution? Do students feel safe regardless of economic status, ethnicity or gender? What can you do to improve total safety? Is your school a place where students and staff feel accepted and respected? When was it that you experienced a sense of belongingness in your school? What can you do to invite others to belong at your school? What teams or clubs can people join to feel like they belong? Describe a time when you were proud to be a member of your school.

Are your ELL students going to Friday night football games? I often ask this question to high school principals. The question can also be asked this way, "Do your ELL students feel like they belong? Do they have school pride? Are they proud to be a [insert mascot here]?" This ultimately gets to the question of belongingness. Cliques are a natural part of human behavior. We gravitate to safety and belonging and often the folks we find look like us or share some interests. After all, who are your P.E. teachers

and coaches hanging out with? Typically, it's with other coaches. What really matters is how the groups interact, relate and convene. What opportunities do students have for play? Music, theater, art, and sports invite students to become rhythmically engaged, fostering competence and collective bonding while they practice embodying emotions and giving voice to them.

“ Do your ELL students feel like they belong? Do they have school pride? Are they proud to be a [insert mascot here]?” This ultimately gets to the question of belongingness.

In “The Body Keeps the Score,” Bessel van der Kolk emphasizes that competence is the best defense against the helplessness of trauma. I believe that competence is best fostered in skills development and identity development using the power of narrative. As the director of La Cima (The Summit) Bilingual Leadership Camp and La Chispa (The Spark) workshops, my strategy is to lead with questions that reveal the dignity in one's story. What are my gifts? Who do I come from? Can you describe a time when you were proud to be a member of your community? How can I use my gifts to serve? What relationships were in place to support this amazing moment? Can you tell us about your family's educational history and what that means to you?

Dignity is an acceptance of identity, inclusion, acknowledgment and imagination. We invite students to envision new possibilities for access and liberation in their personal and educational lives. But first, we have to ask the right questions. ■

Our quarterly profile of educational leadership in Washington state.

CAMAS ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL KEEPS CONNECTING THE DOTS

Clint Williams is the Washington State 2016 Assistant Principal of the Year. The award is bestowed by the Association of Washington Middle Level Principals (AWMLP), a governing board of the Association of Washington School

Principals (AWSP). The honor alternates yearly between a middle level principal and a high school principal. This year it's the middle level's turn. Williams won the award for his student-centered and personalized approach.



What made you decide to go into education?

I actually did not go to college to pursue a career in education. I majored in athletic training and was sure I was going to medical school to become an orthopedic surgeon. However, as I worked through the athletic training program in college, I found that I really enjoyed working with and teaching the younger students in the program. I loved seeing the light bulb come on when it “clicked” for them. When I was offered a graduate assistant position, I took the opportunity to get my teaching certificate and my master’s degree in education. As I worked through my student teaching, I knew I had made the right decision and that education was where I was meant to be.

“ I loved seeing the light bulb come on when it ‘clicked’ for them.

What led you to pursue the principalship?

My grandfather was the superintendent of a very small district in Oregon for 30 years. When

“ I enjoy the variety involved in my daily routine, and having the opportunity to interact with office staff members, teachers, district office personnel, parents and students all in the same day.

I made the decision to become a teacher, he was very proud someone from his family was following in his footsteps. After a few years of teaching, he started to encourage me to look at administration. Even as a relatively new teacher, I had been interested in leadership roles within the building and had pursued those opportunities. After several conversations with him, and a few more years of teaching, I made the decision to explore the option. During my two-year internship, I discovered that I enjoyed the leadership role a great deal and even looked forward to my mostly unscripted day. I liked not always knowing how my day would unfold, and more importantly, I enjoyed the opportunity to help lead a group of teachers and support staff that was dedicated to making sure that each student within the school met their full potential.

What’s the best part about being an assistant principal? The most challenging?

No two days are ever the same as an

administrator. I enjoy the variety involved in my daily routine, and having the opportunity to interact with office staff members, teachers, district office personnel, parents and students all in the same day. There is a lot going on, and it seems that more responsibilities get added to our plates on a daily basis, but I enjoy the challenge of keeping all of those balls in the air. To me, it is a giant jigsaw puzzle and I get to figure out how all of the managerial duties such as master schedules, testing schedules, and student supervision mesh and fit together with my role as a learning leader. The key, to me, is making sure that they do fit together and are not seen as separate entities. Doing what is best for kids is at the heart of everything; I try never to lose sight of that goal. This can also present the challenge of being an assistant principal. Many times, what is best for kids does not always mean what is best, or often easiest, for adults. My job, as the administrator, is to help the adults involved see the student benefit behind any decision that is made. This

“ To me, the biggest challenge is helping our teachers and staff focus on what seems to be a number of constantly moving targets.

can often take a great deal of tact and courage to have those conversations, but it is crucial that they occur.

What are the biggest challenges facing principals today?

I think it's always easy to say the volume of work is a challenge, and it is. There seems to be no end to the to-do list and the number of responsibilities that continue to be added to the job description. I also believe that we all go into these positions knowing that those responsibilities are there, so while it can be a challenge to meet all of these demands, it is not unexpected. To me, the biggest challenge is helping our teachers and staff focus on what seems to be a number of constantly moving targets. While I believe that education should never be static, the amount of changes recently can make it difficult for teachers to prepare and feel good about what they are doing for students on a daily basis. Just when teachers think they are getting a grasp on what students are expected to know, the standards change and the assessment is brand new. Throw in a new evaluation system, and it is easy to see how this can be frustrating and overwhelming. As an administrator, our job is to help make sense of all of the changes and to help others see that they are all connected and in place to help our students. That is not always easy to do with staff members who, understandingly, feel like the demands on their time are daunting. It can be a challenge to stay positive, and more importantly, maintain a positive environment in the school.

What do you view as some of the strengths and opportunities of education reform?

Education reform, in all of its aspects, is about depth of knowledge. The new teacher evaluation system gives teachers and administrators the framework to have in-depth, productive conversations about teaching practices. Within our district, we have embraced the system as one of professional growth and development as educators. Since its implementation, my conversations with teachers have become much richer and more centered on student learning. With the addition of student growth data, we are learning, together, how to best meet the needs of each of our students. The implementation of Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards has led to a shift away from memorization of facts to developing students who can creatively solve the problems they may face. It's exciting for me to work with teachers to help develop a growth mindset within our students that will allow them to persevere and apply the knowledge that they are learning in school to help change our world for the better. The world we are preparing students for is very different now, and will be even more different in the future, than the world that we were prepared for. The depth of knowledge that is expected from our students will help them to succeed in that world.

What advice would you give to a new assistant principal?

First, be visible. It's very easy with all of the demands on your time and the number of meetings that you will be in to get sucked into the office, but it is important to be out amongst the students and the teachers. Just as with teaching, building relationships with staff and students is the key to success as an administrator. This cannot be accomplished from your office. Your relationships will be very different from those you developed

as a teacher, but they are crucial to your success. Second, be humble. It is unreasonable to expect perfection in this job at any point, especially in the beginning. Don't be afraid to ask questions and remember that listening to understand is a crucial skill. If you make a mistake, be honest about it and own it. The respect you gain from this far outweighs the mistake you made initially. Finally, be organized and be flexible. The demands on your time will be many, so it is important to find an organization system that works for you. With that said, don't overschedule your day, because unexpected things will always come up. It is important to be flexible and able to roll with changes that will happen during your day.

“ The demands on your time will be many, so it is important to find an organization system that works for you.

What do you do to unwind and step away?

I love spending time with my family. My wife and two daughters are my go to whenever I need to unwind. Fortunately, my daughters are at ages where family fun is still cool, so we plan to take advantage of that for as long as we can. As a proud alumnus of Washington State University, that often involves trips to Pullman to see the Cougs in action. I also love to get outdoors and go for a hike or take the family camping. Balance is a key component to doing this job well, and my family helps me to find that balance. ■

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The AWSP Leadership Framework Meets the New Standards for Educational Leaders 2015

Gary Kipp

AWSP Executive Director

This past fall, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration released the revision of the ISLLC Standards, which have been renamed the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) 2015. In the wings, we were waiting to see what's changed and how these new standards line up with the eight criteria in the AWSP Leadership Framework. Can these two live peacefully under one roof as a family to support principals in our state?

We initially hit a speed bump with the new name. The sound ISLLC makes as it is slurred out of one's mouth is almost soothing. It can be uttered with nearly no muscular movement at

all, just one big exhale. PSEL, on the other hand, takes more energy to say, seems a bit angry and almost sounds naughty. While we have concluded that the name is a step down, we have also concluded that the contents are a step up and actually make a nice family when combined with the AWSP Framework.

Identical Twins: Let's start with the identical twins. The titles of *Standard 3* and *Criterion 8* are *Equity and Cultural Responsiveness and Closing the Gap* respectively. Could the details of the standard mesh with the language in the rubric of the criterion? Absolutely, in fact, many of the phrases used are exactly the same.

One of the most important sets of identical twins are *Standard 6, Professional Capacity of School Personnel* and *Criterion 5, Improving Instruction*. Better teaching means better learning and principal leadership is critical to foster that.

Also in the identical twin category are *Standard 8, Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community*, and *Criterion 7, Engaging Communities*. Again, when analyzing the intent and phraseology of the details of each of these, we can see that they are dressed alike.

Rounding out our identical twin category is *Standard 10, School Improvement* and *Criterion 3, Planning with Data*. Both were created to focus on proactive leadership skills necessary to take a school from point A to Point B in a particular category.

“ Together they stand as a complement to each other and a re-articulation of the immense, complex and grueling work of school principals today. A complex, multi-dimensional family, just like in real life.

Fraternal Twins: In the fraternal twin category, we find *Standard 9, Operations and Management* linking up with *Criterion 6, Managing Resources*. On the surface we might consider these two identical, but *Standard 9* includes such things as “Develop and administer systems for fair and equitable management of conflict among students, faculty and staff, leaders, families, and community.” In the AWSP Framework, this is found in *Criterion 2, Ensuring School Safety*. This quirk takes these two out of the identical category, but leaves them twins that could share a bedroom if need be.

Our next set of fraternal twins is *Standard 4, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment* paired with *Criterion 4, Aligning Curriculum*. The descriptive language in both speaks to alignment

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of curriculum, instruction and assessment, but this Standard goes into instruction in more depth, which we find in *Criterion 5, Improving Instruction*. Again, good enough to be a twin, not good enough to be identical.

Siblings: We are now left with a set of brothers and sisters that get along quite well. *Standard 1, Mission, Vision, and Core Values, Standard 5 Community of Care and Support for Students* and *Standard 7, Professional Community for Teachers and Staff* align with *Criterion 1, Creating a Culture and Criterion 2, Ensuring School Safety*. All of these speak to the communal and environmental requisites to fostering “each student’s academic success and well-being,” which are the last words of all of the standards.

Parents: So what’s left after the siblings? The parents. We assumed their overarching presence across all criteria in the Framework, but they are specifically introduced in *Standard 2, Ethics and Professional Norms*. In all they do, “effective leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.”

The AWSP Leadership Framework welcomes the new family of Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 as validation for the work of those who created the Framework. Together they stand as a complement to each other and a re-articulation of the immense, complex and grueling work of school principals today. A complex, multi-dimensional family, just like in real life. ■



Gary Kipp has served as AWSP’s executive director since 2003. He has more than 40 years experience as a teacher, assistant principal, principal and assistant superintendent.

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Created by **David Ford**, Principal, Tenino Elementary, Tenino SD.
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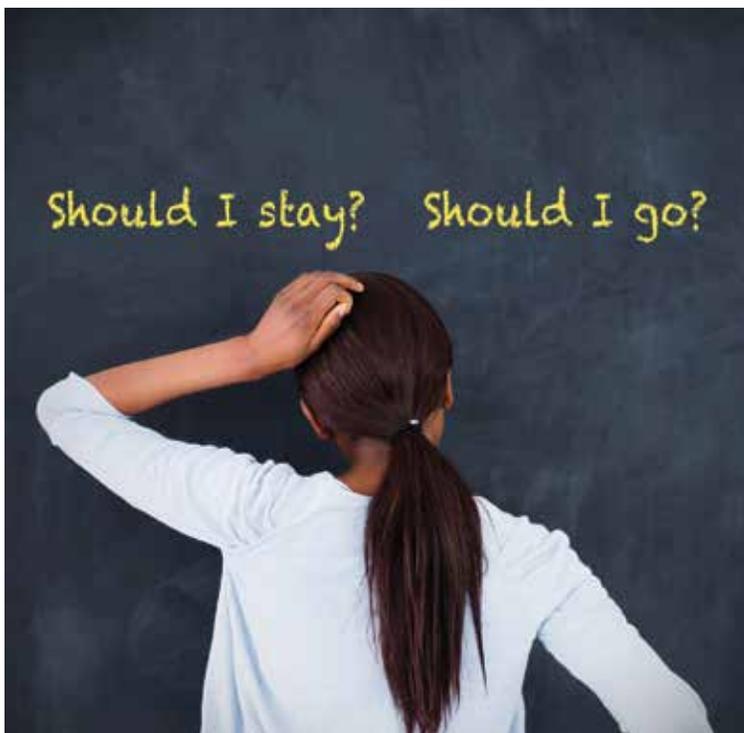
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