THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Prepared by Sabra S. Tucker
Words of Wisdom

“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.” - John F. Kennedy

“Surround yourself with the best people you can find, delegate authority, and don’t interfere as long as the policy you’ve decided upon is being carried out.” - Ronald Reagan

“A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don’t necessarily want to go, but ought to be.” - Rosalynn Carter
History of the Research

- Effective Schools Movement
- “All children can learn.”
  - Not designed to investigate leadership
  - Ambiguous findings concerning the principal’s role in improvement
  - Researchers found common behaviors in the actions of principals of higher achieving schools
History of the Research

Larry Lezotte and Ronald Edmonds

7 Correlates of Effective Schools
- Safe and orderly environment
- Climate of high expectation for staff and students
- Opportunity to Learn/Time on task
- Home-School relations
- Instructional leadership
- Clear and focused mission
- Frequent monitoring of student progress
Where are we now?

  - Comprehensive narrative review of literature related to school leadership (81 research articles)
  - Published the book *Principals and Student Achievement: What the Research Says*
  - Identified 25 categories of principal behaviors that positively affect student achievement.
Kathleen Cotton (2003)

- 25 Categories of Principal Behaviors
  - 1. Safe and orderly environment
  - 2. Vision and goals focused on high levels of student learning
  - 3. High expectations for student learning
  - 4. Self-confidence, responsibility, perseverance
  - 5. Visibility and accessibility
  - 6. Positive and supportive climate
7. Communication and interaction
8. Emotional and interpersonal support
9. Parent and community outreach and involvement
10. Rituals, ceremonies, symbolic actions
11. Shared leadership and decision making
12. Collaboration
13. Instructional leadership
14. Ongoing pursuit of high levels of student learning
15. Norm of continuous improvement
16. Discussion of instructional issues
17. Classroom observation and feedback to teachers
18. Support of teachers’ autonomy
19. Support of risk taking
20. Professional development opportunities/resources
21. Protecting instructional time
22. Monitoring/sharing student progress
23. Data-driven program improvement

24. Student and staff recognition of achievement

25. Role modeling
School Leadership that Works
Marzano (2005)

- Meta-Analysis
  - Reviewed relevant studies from 1970 to 2005
  - Used data from 69 studies
  - 2,802 schools involved
    - 14,000 teachers
    - 1,400,000 students
So what does the research say?

- 21 Responsibilities of the School Leader (Marzano, Waters, and McNulty, 2005)
The 21 Responsibilities and Day-to-Day Management of a School

1. Monitoring/Evaluating
2. Culture
3. Ideals/Beliefs
4. Knowledge of Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction
5. Involvement with Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction
6. Focus
7. Order
8 & 9. Affirmation; Intellectual Stimulation
10. Communication
11. Input
12. Relationships
13. Optimizer
14. Flexibility
15. Resources
16. Contingent Rewards
17. Situational Awareness
18. Outreach
19. Visibility
20. Discipline
21. Change Agent
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- July 2010
- 6 Year Study
- Analyzed 5 Types of Research
  - Qualitative case studies
  - Quantitative large-scale studies
  - Quantitative with specific behaviors and effects
  - Studies of student engagement
  - Research on leadership succession
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Learning from Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning

$3.5 million

3 Sections

Part I

What School Leaders Do to Improve Student Achievement
Findings

- Part Two: Districts and Their Leaders: How to Foster School Improvement and Student Learning

- Part Three: State Leadership and Relationships with Districts
Effective Principals Embrace Collective Leadership
- Education Week

- School improvement efforts have to focus on the leadership of the school.
- Successful principals set conditions that enable teachers to be better instructors.
- Collective leadership does NOT mean a principal loses clout.
- Reinforces the need for comprehensive professional development for leaders.
Qualities of Effective Principals

- Conclusive qualities identified by Stronge et al (2008)
  - Clear vision for their school
  - Quality of instructions
  - High expectations of students and teachers
  - Optimism and confidence
  - Focus on continual improvement
  - Clear communication to all stakeholders that student learning is the school’s most important mission
References


