

M.Ed. SEMESTER-IV
Paper; CC14 Education Management, Administration and
Leadership

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UNIT-II, Chapter-1(b)

Dear Student,

Our UNIT-II, **Leadership in Educational Management** is going on and first chapter of this unit is **Leadership- Meaning and Nature** and now we will explore its second part i.e. **The Principal as a Leader**.

The Principal as a Leader

“Great school leaders constantly pay attention. They build a culture focused on student learning. They confront mediocre teaching. They invite. They inspire. They support families, students, and school staff in ways that lead to improvement. They want to be trusted, not simply liked.”

-Nichole Leighton

Great leadership is the key to success in any school. Leadership not only sets the stage for long-term achievement, but it ensures that there will be sustainability

long after they're gone. In a school setting, a leader must be multifaceted as they deal with other administrators, teachers, support staff, students, and parents on a daily basis. This is not an easy job, but many administrators are experts at leading the various subgroups. They can effectively work with and support every person at the school.

Great principals lead schools effectively. Under the leadership of a great principal, teachers thrive, students engage with core content and school administrative functions run smoothly. Principals serve as the head of their schools, and their decisions affect school culture, parent involvement and overall community satisfaction. The level of influence a principal possesses, along with the benefits that can accompany the position, make it a post that many motivated educators aspire to hold.

Increasing awareness of a school principal's influence on student and teachers' performance is reshaping how educational leaders and thinkers view school reform. The key to school reform lies in effective leadership. Schools are recruiting top-quality educational leaders and empowering them to create the educational changes. **As leadership expert John Maxwell famously put it, "Everything rises and falls on leadership."**

Not everyone has what it takes to execute the job effectively, however. Serving as a principal requires specific skills and characteristics that positively affect the school as a whole

Characteristics of the Principal

There has been a radical transformation in school leadership. Principals no longer function as just managers and administrators. Principal must possess keen transformational leadership skills. They're expected to manage staffing issues, such as the hiring and dismissal of teachers and support staff; oversee improvements in student academic achievement; maintain administrative and facilities management.

Some of the characteristics that a principal should possess to become a great leader are mentioned below-

Dedicated

A good administrator must be dedicated to the school and the belief that all decisions must be made in terms of the best interests of the students. A principal needs to embody school spirit. Just like being highly visible, it needs to be obvious to students that the principal loves the school and has their best interests at heart. Principals should normally be the first to arrive and the last to leave the school. This type of dedication can be difficult to maintain but pays enormous dividends with staff, students, and society at large.

Fair and Consistent

An effective principal should be credible in handling situations. The principals must be fair and consistent. They need to have the same rules and procedures for all staff and students. They cannot show favoritism. They cannot allow their personal feelings or loyalties to cloud their judgment. Nothing can take away their credibility faster than being inconsistent in their judgment. While no two cases are exactly the same, a good principal should have a standard approach for handling similar situations.

Problem-Solver

Problem-solving is the core of the principal's job. In many cases, new principals are brought into a school because it is facing tough issues. It might be that the school's test scores are low, that it has a high number of discipline issues, or that it is facing financial issues due to poor leadership by the previous administrator. New or established, any principal will be asked to help with many difficult and challenging situations. Therefore, they need to hone their problem-solving skills by learning to prioritize and provide concrete steps to solve the issues at hand.

Takes initiative

An effective school leader keeps the restructuring process churning and then allows faculty and staff to bring their own visions and initiatives to the planning table. This allows them to “own” the sharing of ideas and perspectives of programs under consideration. A good principal should give their employees a sense of empowerment. While teachers are typically in charge of their individual classrooms, many feel powerless to affect the ethos of the entire school.

Principals need to be open and responsive to teacher suggestions for school improvement.

Has a Clear Vision

A principal is the leader of the school. Ultimately, they have the responsibility for everything that goes on there. Principal must articulate a strong and positive vision of how they want to improve the school, along with showcasing adeptness at identifying problems and creating solutions. Their attitude and vision need to be loud and clear. They might find it useful to create their own vision statement which they post for all to see and must consistently enforce their own educational philosophy into the school setting.

Listening

Effective principal should be focused and attentive. He should always be prepared to deal with whatever situations may arise. One can disarm most difficult situations simply by showing care and willingness to hear them out. Leaders listen to the people around them, consider a variety of ideas and then make their decisions. Great principals spend time listening to students, teachers, parents, other administrators and educational researchers.

They need to learn and practice active listening skills every single day. They need to be present in each conversation despite the other hundred or so things that are calling for their attention. They also need to hear what is being said to them before coming up with their response.

Leadership

A principal holds a title, and with it, the authority to implement their will on teachers and students. However, a great principal uses influence, as opposed to demands, to illicit the desired behaviors and attitudes from their team and students. Every principal must exhibit exemplary leadership qualities for others to follow, including staff and students alike. An effective leader should be responsible for the successes and the failures of his school. People follow an effective leader because they want to, not just because they have to. A good Principal should at all times find new ways to improve his schools no matter the difficulties at hand.

Visibility

A good principal must be seen. They must be out in the hallways, interacting with students, participating in pep rallies, and attending sports matches.

Effective principals make it a priority to spend time in the classroom, the lunchroom, the hallway, the bus line and the main office. Essentially, they get out of the office. This approach used to be called management by walking around, or MBWA.

By simply walking around their workplaces, leaders can glean a lot from observing their team, resources, student behavior and how teachers respond to students in formal and non-formal setting. The presence of Principal must be such that students know who they are and also feel comfortable approaching and interacting with them.

Relationships

Everyone wants to maintain relationships with other people, but meaningful relationships go deeper, they have purpose. To build meaningful relationships, great leaders need to know how to set and respond to relational boundaries. They don't isolate themselves or let their teachers hunker down in their classrooms all alone. They also don't force all teachers to act or teach alike.

Great principals establish high, reasonable and clear expectations that don't keep teachers guessing. This approach creates trust, allowing teachers to be comfortable with taking ideas or problems to the principal. By creating meaningful relationships with parents and students, principals can often curtail problems or conflicts before they begin. In so doing, these principals keep teachers from having to manage too many emotionally draining situations on top of their regular work.

Support

Good teachers need to feel supported. They need to believe that when they have an issue in their classroom, they will get the help they need. This is not to say that principals should blindly back teachers without using their judgment. Teachers are human beings who make mistakes, too. Nonetheless, the overall feeling from the principal should be one of belief and support. The best principals practiced "strategic retention." A great principal must be able to discern between high- and

low-performing teachers. They must be able to create an environment in which high Performers flourish and low performers can grow and improve.

Have a Shared Vision

A leader has a continuous vision for improvement that guides how they operate. They are never satisfied and always believe they can do more. They are passionate about what they do. They are able to get those around them to buy into their vision and to become as enthusiastic about it as they are. A leader is not afraid to expand or to scale back their vision when appropriate. They actively seek input from those around them. A leader has both a short-term vision to meet immediate needs, and a long-term vision to meet future needs.

Be Well Respected

A leader understands that respect is something that is earned naturally over time. They do not force others around them to respect them. Instead, they earn others respect by giving respect. Leaders give others around them the opportunities to be their best. Highly respected leaders may not always be agreed with, but people almost always listen to them.

Selfless

A leader puts others first. They make humble decisions that may not necessarily benefit themselves, but instead is the best decision for the majority. These decisions may instead make their job increasingly difficult. A leader sacrifices personal time to help where and when they are needed. They are not worried about how they look as long as it is benefiting their school or school community.

Adapt to Change

A leader understands that situations change and are not afraid to change with them. They quickly assess any situation and adapt appropriately. They are not afraid to change their approach when something is not working. They will make subtle adjustments or scrap a plan entirely and start from scratch. A leader uses the resources they have available and makes them work in any situation.

Understand Individual Strengths and Weaknesses

A leader understands that it is the individual parts in a machine that keeps the entire machine running. They know which of those parts are fine-tuned, which are in need of a little repair, and which could potentially need to be replaced. A leader knows each teacher's individual strengths and weaknesses. They show them how to use their strengths to make an impact on and create personal development plans to improve their weaknesses. A leader also evaluates the entire faculty as a whole and provides professional development and training in areas where improvement is needed.

Develops Professionalism

A leader works hard to make every teacher better. They encourage them to grow continuously and improve. They challenge their teachers, create goals, and provide ongoing support for them. They schedule meaningful professional development and training for their staff. A leader creates an atmosphere where distractions are minimized. They encourage their teachers to be positive, fun, and spontaneous.

Accepts Mistakes

A leader strives for perfection with the understanding that they are not perfect. They know that they are going to make mistakes. When they do make a mistake, they own up to that mistake. A leader works hard to rectify any issues that arise as a result of a mistake. The most important thing that a leader learns from their mistake is that it should not be repeated.

Hold Others Accountable

A leader does not allow others to get away with mediocrity. They hold them accountable for their actions and reprimand them when necessary. Everyone including students have specific jobs to do at school. A leader will ensure that everyone understands what is expected of them while they are at school. They create specific policies that address each situation and enforce them when they are broken.

Takes Difficult Decisions

Leaders are always under the microscope. They are praised for their school's successes and scrutinized for their failures. A leader will make difficult decisions that can lead to scrutiny. They understand that not every decision is the same and even cases with similarities may need to be handled differently. They evaluate each student discipline case individually and listen to all sides. A leader works hard to help a teacher improve, but when the teacher refuses to cooperate, they terminate them. They make hundreds of decisions each day. A leader evaluates each one thoroughly and makes the decision they believe will be the most beneficial for the entire school.

Continuous Learner

Great principals never stop learning. Common sense dictates that the best educators and leaders are also lifelong learners. Educators can take charge of their professional development through a specific series of steps. They start by taking an initial self-assessment, setting career growth goals, working toward those goals and finally conducting a post-activity self-assessment.

In the end we can conclude that, Principals are increasingly accountable for cultivating a positive school culture that's conducive to learning and student development. This involves cultivating a positive learning environment, restructuring of programs and methodologies to improve the performance of the school, creating a vision, facilitating a hospitable educational climate, encouraging others in leadership, managing human and other resources and processes to bring about needed improvements within the school. It's up to school leaders to maintain a thriving educational environment for teachers and students alike.

“A leader of leaders—that's what a great principal is.”

Things a Successful School Principal Does Differently

Being a principal has its challenges. It is not an easy profession. It is a high-stress job that most people are not equipped to handle. A principal's job description is broad. They have their hands in virtually everything related to students, teachers, and parents. They are the chief decision-maker in the building.

A successful school principal does things differently. As with any other profession, there are those principals who excel at what they do and those who lack the skills necessary to be successful. Most principals are in the middle of that range. The best principals have a particular mindset and a leadership philosophy that allows them to be successful. They utilize a combination of strategies that make themselves and others around them better thus allowing them to be successful.

Surround Themselves with Good Teachers

Hiring good teachers makes a principal's job easier in virtually every aspect. Good teachers are solid disciplinarians, they communicate well with parents, and they provide their students with a quality education. Each of these things makes a principal's job easier.

As a principal, you want a building full of teachers that you know are doing their job. You want teachers that are 100% committed to being effective teachers in every aspect. You want teachers who not only do their job well but are willing to go above and beyond the core requirements to ensure that every student is successful. Simply put, surrounding yourself with good teachers makes you look better, makes your job easier, and allows you to manage other aspects of your job.

Lead by Example

As a principal, you are the leader of the building. Every person in the building is watching how you go about your daily business. Build a reputation for being the hardest worker in your building. You should almost always be the first one to arrive and the last one to leave. It is essential that others know how much you

love your job. Keep a smile on your face, maintain a positive attitude, and handle adversity with grit and perseverance. Always maintain professionalism. Be respectful to everyone and embrace differences. Be the model for fundamental qualities such as organization, efficiency, and communication.

Think Differently

Never put limitations on yourself and your teachers. Be resourceful and find creative ways to meet needs when issues arise. Do not be afraid to think outside the box. Encourage your teachers to do the same. Successful school principals are elite problem solvers. Answers do not always come easy. You have to utilize the resources creatively you have or figure out ways to get new resources to meet your needs. A terrific problem solver never dismisses another person's idea or suggestion. Instead, they seek out and value input from others cooperatively creating solutions to problems.

Work With People

As a principal, you have to learn to work with all different types of people. Each person has their own personality, and you must learn to work effectively with each type. The best principals are able to read people well, figure out what motivates them, and strategically plant seeds that will eventually blossom into success. Principals must work with every stakeholder in the community. They should be skilled listeners who value feedback and use it to make recognizable changes. Principals should be on the front lines, working with the stakeholders to improve both their community and school.

Delegate Appropriately

Being a principal can be overwhelming. This is often amplified as principals by nature are typically control freaks. They have high expectations on how things should be done making it difficult to let others take the lead role. Successful principals are able to get past this because they realize there is value in delegating. First of all, it shifts the burden of responsibility from you, freeing you up to work on other projects. Next, you can strategically make individuals

responsible for projects that you know fit their strengths and will help build their confidence. Finally, delegating reduces your overall workload, which in turn keeps your stress level at a minimum.

Create and Enforce Proactive Policies

Every principal should be an adept policy writer. Each school is different and has their own unique needs in terms of policy. Policy works best when it is written and enforced in such a way that very few want to take the chance to receive the attached consequences. Most principals will spend a large part of their day dealing with student discipline. Policy should be seen as a deterrent to distractions that interrupt learning. Successful principals are proactive in their approach to policy writing and student discipline. They recognize potential problems and address them before they become a significant issue.

Look for Long-Term Solutions to Problems

A quick fix is seldom the right solution. Long-term solutions require more time and effort in the beginning. However, they typically save you time in the long run, because you won't have to deal with it as much in the future. Successful principals think two to three steps ahead. They address the little picture by fixing the large picture. They look beyond the specific circumstance to get to the cause of the problem. They understand that taking care of the core problem may head off several smaller issues down the road, potentially saving both time and money.

Become an Information Hub

Principals have to be experts in many different areas including content and policy. Successful principals are a wealth of information. They stay up-to-date on the latest educational research, technology, and trends. Principals should at least have a working knowledge of the content being taught in each grade for which they are responsible. They follow educational policy at both the state and local areas. They keep their teachers informed and are able to offer tips and strategies concerning best classroom practices. Teachers respect principals who understand the content they are teaching. They appreciate when their principal offers well

thought out, applicable solutions to problems they may be having in the classroom.

Maintain Accessibility

As a principal, it is easy to get so busy that you shut your office door to try and get a few things done. This is perfectly acceptable as long as it isn't done a regular basis. Principals must be accessible to all stakeholders including teachers, staff members, parents, and especially students. Every principal should have an open door policy. Successful principals understand that building and maintaining healthy relationships with everyone you work with is a key component to having an outstanding school. Being in high demand comes with the job. Everyone will come to you when they need something or when there is a problem. Always make yourself available, be a good listener, and most importantly follow through on a solution.

Students are the First Priority

Successful principals keep students as their number one priority. They never deviate from that path. All expectations and actions are directed to ensure a quality school for better students both individually and as a whole. Student safety, health, and academic growth are our most fundamental duties. Every decision that is made has to take the impact it will make on a student or group of students into account. We are there to nurture, counsel, discipline, and educate each and every student. As a principal, you must never lose sight of the fact that students should always be our focal point.

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Dear students,

I am sending you this content but you should prepare your own notes after going through the content.