

ADMinsight

A fact sheet for principals & vice-principals that focuses on leadership in public education

Question

“With increasing managerial demands how do school leaders make time for educational leadership?”

Key Points

Urgency Dependency

A leader’s obsession with urgency mirrors many of the same addictive patterns addressed in 12 - step recovery programs. Recognize the signs and respond accordingly.

What is an Emergency?

The majority of events at school are not emergencies but disruptive events that can alter normal schedule or routines. It is important to let staff and parents know what constitutes a true emergency and what your response will be.

Increase Visibility

Increasing your level of visibility to teachers, parents and students means that you can engage in proactive intervention. Visibility does not mean trying to be everywhere at all times but better understanding where being visible provides the highest level of proactive intervention.



Educational Leadership

Researchers agree that effective principals are responsible for establishing a school-wide vision of commitment to high standards and success for all students. Principals are often called the second most crucial influencers, after teachers, of student learning.

Establish Firm Priorities

Educational leaders develop visions that embody the best thinking about teaching and learning. School leaders often inspire those around them to strive for ambitious goals and schools excel when there is a common direction for growth. An effective vision also announces to parents and students where the school is heading and why they should take the trip with you. Curriculum implementation is more effective when it is linked with the development or review of a school's vision and values.

Distribute Leadership

Most school leaders would agree that they have too much to do and find it difficult to let go to some of those tasks that could be capably handled by others. Delegation is a key principle of effective leadership. Delegating is about motivating others to get involved by accessing the talents and the collective wisdom within the building or program area. The starting point for distributing school leadership is by understanding the talents and capacity of your staff members.



Key Points

Closed Door Time

Keeping your office door open goes along with way with staff and parents however, a great deal of time can be co-opted by having an open door policy. Closing your door for times throughout the school day to accomplish tasks means that you can be more present and available during your open door times.

Handle Things Only Once

Deal with each issue, memo or email as soon as possible. Seeing tasks through to the end when first presented with the task can save time later in the day. Acting on each issue in the moment can serve to reduce ineffective uses of your time later on.

Prioritize Your Health

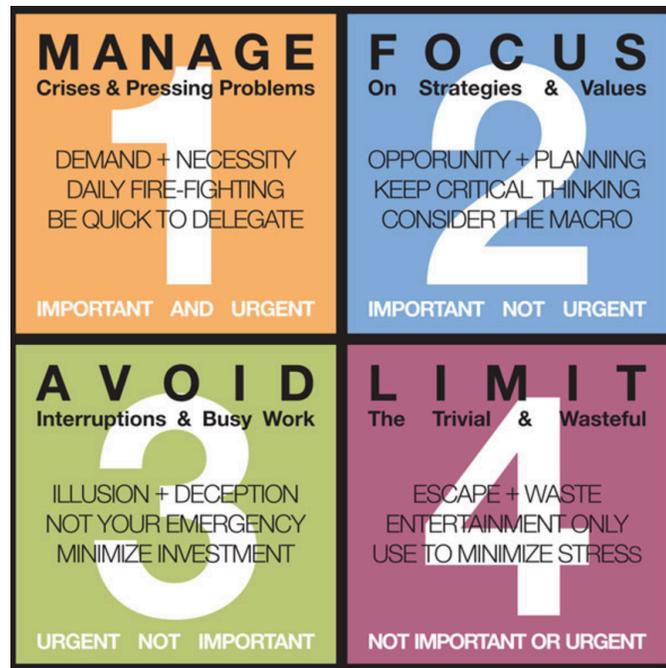
Your health is more important than any time-stealing task that lands on your desk. Being an effective educational leader is an important function of work-life balance and wellbeing. A key piece of health and wellness is giving yourself permission to be imperfect.

Establish Set Routines

Experienced principals and vice-principals create systems for routine procedures to save time. Becoming efficient at managerial tasks can result in increased opportunities for educational leadership. Analyze your daily activities to find opportunities for efficiencies and systemization of common procedures.

Analyze Your Time

According to Steven Covey, the key is not to prioritize your schedule but to schedule your priorities. Using a time management grid such as Covey’s Time Management Matrix can help school leaders better understand how they spend their time during their day. Using the grid example below, educational leadership tasks would fall into the focus section.



REFERENCES:

Lovely, S. (2006). Setting leadership priorities: What’s necessary, what’s nice, and what’s got to go. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press [Note: this resource was given to Principal Congress 2011 participants in February 2011]

Leithwood, K. & Beatty, B. (2008). Leading with teacher emotions in mind. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press