

# Preface to the Second Edition

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In the first edition of *The Elementary School Principal's Calendar*, we noted that the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) identified four fundamental areas that are prerequisites for success as a principal. The first was the need to have an advanced understanding of the teaching and learning process. Second, contemporary school leaders should have a thorough understanding of child growth and development and of adult learning. Third, the principal should have a broad base of knowledge, including a solid background in the liberal arts. Last, we noted that the elementary school principal should have a sincere commitment to educational equity and excellence at all levels for children.

As we researched the qualities of successful school leaders, it became obvious that the NAESP's criteria did not fully capture the depth of the skills, knowledge, dispositions, and performances required of contemporary elementary school principals. We firmly believe that today's school leaders should be humane and collaborative. They must be skilled in anticipating situations that could possibly distract staff members from their primary mission or possibly upset the academic tone of the school. Finally, they must be able to make the difficult decisions when dealing with children, parents, and staff. This includes, but is not restricted to, the assignments of teachers and students and the separation of incompetent teachers from one's staff.

Perhaps Jack Welch, the former chief executive officer of General Electric, captured the above sentiments more cogently. Mr. Welch described his staff as being akin to a lovely "garden." The garden was nurtured by the firm's leaders and additionally had its own energy, vitality, and creativity. However, there were times when the garden had to be weeded. We believe that today's principals achieve the highest status when they "weed" out inferior staff members and thus guarantee that every child has an excellent teacher. Caring is not only being kind and humane. It is often demonstrated by making the difficult decisions that unfortunately might be viewed as unpopular and devoid of humane sentiment.

Our research led us to the most comprehensive standards for school principals, which were formulated by the Council of Chief State School Leaders, titled, *Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium: Standards for School Leaders*. They are referred to as the ISLLC Standards. The standards have been accepted by several states and used to license school principals. More important is that these descriptors have been the basis for the restructuring of principal

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preparation programs at many universities. Additionally, it has served as the model used by numerous states and educational consultants to redesign professional inservice programs for incumbent principals. As noted below, each of the six standards contains the phrase, "A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by . . ." The standards leave no doubt that a principal's first priority is the education, health, and safety of children. Each of the six standards is divided into three sections titled "Knowledge, Dispositions, and Performances."

**Standard 1:** *A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.*

**Knowledge**—The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- Learning goals in a pluralistic society
- The principles of developing and implementing strategic plans
- Systems theory
- Information sources, data collections, and data analysis strategies
- Effective communication
- Effective consensus-building and negotiations skills

**Dispositions**—The administrator believes in values and is committed to:

- The educability of all
- A school vision of high standards of learning
- Continuous school improvement
- The inclusion of all members of the school community
- Ensuring that students have the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become successful adults
- A willingness to continuously examine one's own assumptions, beliefs, and practices
- Doing the work required for high levels of personal and organizational performance

**Performances**—The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

- The vision and mission of the school are effectively communicated to staff, parents, students, and community members.
- The vision and mission are communicated through the use of symbols, ceremonies, stories, and similar activities.
- The core beliefs of the school vision are modeled for all stakeholders.
- The vision is developed with and among the stakeholders.

- The contribution of the school community members to the realization of the vision are recognized and celebrated.
- Progress toward the vision and mission is communicated to all stakeholders.
- The school community is involved in school improvement efforts.
- The vision shapes the educational programs, plans, and actions.
- An implementation plan is developed in which objectives and strategies to achieve the vision and goals are clearly articulated.
- Assessment data related to student learning are used to develop the school vision and goals.
- Relevant demographic data pertaining to students and their families are used in developing the school mission and goals.
- Barriers to achieving the vision are identified, clarified, and addressed.
- Needed resources are sought and obtained to support the implementation of the school mission and goals.
- Existing resources are used in support of the school vision and goals.
- The vision, mission, and implementation plans are regularly monitored, evaluated, and revised.

**Standard 2:** *A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.*

**Knowledge**—The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- Student growth and development
- Applied learning theories
- Applied motivational theories
- Curriculum design, implementation, evaluation, and refinement
- Principles of effective instruction
- Measurement, evaluation, and assessment strategies
- Diversity and its meaning for educational programs
- Adult learning and professional development models
- The change process for systems, organizations, and individuals
- The role of technology in promoting student learning and professional growth
- School cultures

**Dispositions**—The administrator believes in values and is committed to:

- Student learning as the fundamental purpose of school
- The proposition that all students can learn
- The variety of ways in which students can learn
- Lifelong learning for self and others
- Professional development as an integral part of school improvement

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- The benefits that diversity brings to the school community
- A safe and supportive learning environment
- Preparing students to be contributing members of society

### Performances:

- All individuals are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect.
- Professional development promotes a focus on student learning consistent with the school vision and goals.
- Students and staff feel valued and important.
- The responsibilities and contributions of each individual are acknowledged.
- Barriers to student learning are identified, clarified, and addressed.
- Diversity is considered in developing learning experiences.
- Lifelong learning is encouraged and modeled.
- There is a culture of high expectations for self, student, and staff performance.
- Technologies are used in teaching and learning.
- Student and staff accomplishments are recognized and celebrated.
- Multiple opportunities to learn are available to all students.
- The school is organized and aligned for success.
- Curricular, cocurricular, and extracurricular programs are designed, implemented, evaluated, and refined.
- Curriculum decisions are based on research, expertise of teachers, and the recommendation of learned societies.
- The school culture and climate are assessed on a regular basis.
- A variety of sources of information is used to make decisions.
- Student learning is assessed using a variety of techniques.
- Multiple sources of information regarding performance are used by staff and students.
- A variety of supervisory and evaluation models is employed.
- Pupil personnel programs are developed to meet the needs of students and their families.

**Standard 3:** *A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.*

**Knowledge**—The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- Theories and models of organizations and the principles of organizational development
- Operational procedures at the school and district level
- Principles and issues relating to school safety and security
- Human resources management and development
- Principles and issues relating to fiscal operation of school management

- Principles and issues relating to school facilities and school space
- Legal issues impacting school operations
- Current technologies that support management functions

**Dispositions**—The administrator believes in values, and is committed to:

- Making management decisions to enhance learning and teaching
- Taking risks to improve schools
- Trusting people and their judgments
- Accepting responsibility
- High-quality standards, expectations, and performances
- Involving stakeholders in management processes
- A safe environment

**Performances**—The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

- Knowledge of learning, teaching, and student development is used to inform management decisions.
- Operational procedures are designed and managed to maximize opportunities for successful learning.
- Emerging trends are recognized, studied, and applied as appropriate.
- Operational plans and procedures to achieve the vision and goals of the school are in place.
- Collective bargaining and other contractual agreements related to the school are effectively managed.
- The school plant, equipment, and support systems operate safely, efficiently, and effectively.
- Time is managed to maximize attainment of organizational goals.
- Potential problems and opportunities are identified.
- Problems are confronted and resolved in a timely manner.
- Financial, human, and material resources are aligned to the goals of the school.
- The school acts entrepreneurially to support continuous improvement.
- Organizational systems are regularly monitored and modified as needed.
- Stakeholders are involved in decisions affecting schools.
- Responsibility is shared to maximize ownership and accountability.
- Effective problem-framing and problem-solving skills are used.
- Effective conflict resolution skills are used.
- Effective group-process and consensus-building skills are used.
- Effective communication skills are used.
- There is effective use of technology to manage school operations.
- Fiscal resources of the school are managed responsibly, efficiently, and effectively.
- A safe, clean, and aesthetically pleasing school environment is created and maintained.

- Human resource functions support the attainment of school goals.
- Confidentiality and privacy of school records are maintained.

**Standard 4:** *A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.*

**Knowledge**—The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- Emerging issues and trends that potentially impact the school community
- The conditions and dynamics of the diverse school community
- Community resources
- Community relations and marketing strategies and processes
- Successful models of school, family, business, community, government, and higher education partnerships

**Dispositions**—The administrator believes in values and is committed to:

- Schools operating as an integral part of the community
- Collaboration and communication with families
- Involvement of families and other stakeholders in school decision-making processes
- The proposition that diversity enriches the school
- Families as partners in the education of their children
- The proposition that families have the best interests of their children in mind
- Resources of the family and community needing to be brought to bear on the education of students
- An informed public

**Performances**—The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

- High visibility, active involvement, and communication with the larger community are priorities.
- Relationships with community leaders are identified and nurtured.
- Information about family and community concerns, expectations, and needs is used regularly.
- There is outreach to different business, religious, political, and service agencies and organizations.
- Credence is given to individuals and groups whose values and opinions may conflict.
- The school and community serve one another as resources.
- Available community resources are secured to help the school solve problems and achieve goals.

- Partnerships are established with area businesses, institutions of higher learning, and community groups to strengthen programs and support school goals.
- Community youth family services are integrated with school programs.
- Community stakeholders are treated equitably.
- Diversity is recognized and valued.
- Effective media relations are developed and maintained.
- A comprehensive program of community relations is established.
- Public resources and funds are used appropriately and wisely.
- Community collaboration is modeled for staff.
- Opportunities for staff to develop collaborative skills are provided.

**Standard 5:** *A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.*

**Knowledge**—The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- The purpose of education and the role of leadership in modern society
- Various ethical frameworks and perspectives on ethics
- The values of the diverse school community
- Professional codes of ethics
- The philosophy and history of education

**Dispositions**—The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- The ideal of the common good
- The principles in the Bill of Rights
- The right of every student to a free quality education
- Bringing ethical principles to the decision-making process
- Subordinating one's own interest to the good of the community
- Accepting the consequences for upholding one's principles and actions
- Using the influence of one's office constructively and productively in the service of all students and their families
- Development of a caring school community

**Performances**—The administrator:

- Examines personal and professional values
- Demonstrates a personal and professional code of ethics
- Demonstrates values, beliefs, and attitudes that inspire others to higher levels of performance
- Serves as a role model
- Accepts responsibilities for school operations
- Considers the impact of one's administrative practices on others
- Uses the influence of the office to enhance the educational program rather than for personal gain
- Treats people fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect
- Protects the rights and confidentiality of students and staff

- Demonstrates appreciation for and sensitivity to the diversity in the community
- Recognizes and respects the legitimate authority of others
- Examines and considers the prevailing values of the diverse community
- Expects that others in the school community will demonstrate integrity and exercise ethical behavior
- Opens the school to public scrutiny
- Fulfills legal and contractual obligations
- Applies law and procedures fairly, wisely, and considerately

**Standard 6:** *A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.*

**Knowledge**—The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- Principles of representative governance that undergird the system of American schools
- The role of public education in developing and renewing a democratic society and economically productive nation
- The law as related to education and schooling
- The political, social, cultural, and economic systems and processes that impact schools
- Models and strategies of change and conflict resolution as applied to the larger political, social, cultural, and economic contexts of schooling
- Global issues and forces affecting teaching and learning
- The dynamics of policy development and advocacy under our democratic political system
- The importance of diversity and equity in a democratic society

**Dispositions**—The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- Education as a key to opportunity and social mobility
- Recognizing a variety of ideas, values, and cultures
- Importance of continuing dialogue with other decision makers affecting education
- Actively participating in the political and policy-making context in the service of education
- Using legal systems to protect student rights and improve student opportunities

**Performances**—The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

- The environment in which schools operate is influenced on behalf of students and their families.

- Communication occurs among the school community concerning trends, issues, and potential changes in the environment in which schools operate.
- There is ongoing dialogue with representatives of diverse community groups.
- The school community works within the framework of policies, laws, and regulations enacted by local, state, and federal authorities.
- Public policy is shaped to provide quality education for students.
- Lines of communication are developed with decision makers outside of the school community.

This edition of our text is not an attempt to address every standard developed by our erudite colleagues. The job requirements should be valued as wonderful additions to our educational literature, and hopefully will broaden our perspectives on the multitude of skills that are required to be a school administrator. Our book's emphasis is to have aspiring administrators and sitting principals develop the skills to foresee future calendar events, and to put into operation specific plans to maintain a calm learning environment. Comprehending this "anticipatory mentality" will allow principals to elevate their skills to a more sophisticated level. Faculty members, observing these timely administrative decisions, will come to trust the principal's ability to sustain a tension-free school. It is our belief that many scholarly and humane principals fail in their jobs because they lack the ability to anticipate these daily, weekly, and monthly events. Accept this book as a tickler file to be used in conjunction with your own past experiences and memory base. These reminders are a gift from three colleagues, whose only hope is that you will contribute your ideas and expertise to our material, to help those principals who follow in our footsteps.

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