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Happy Spring 2018! In the season of new beginnings, we are excited to launch the first online edition of the Palmetto Administrator magazine and we hope you enjoy reading the articles written by your fellow members.

We are happy to report that our building renovation will soon be completed and by the middle of April, we will move into our new home at One Fernandina Court. We are extremely excited to have more meeting space, a state-of-the-art leadership development center, and our own "home" for the association and its members. Our hope is that you will enjoy the new space and take advantage of the meeting and leadership development opportunities that are offered.

Our Center for Executive Education Leadership (CEEL) continues to grow as we cultivate and develop great school leaders. Many of you have taken advantage of the leadership sessions offered during the current school year, and we will soon be releasing the 2018–2019 dates and topics for each cohort. We remain committed to our goal of providing a leadership learning lab environment that creates an optimum experience for our members.

As always, thank you for your membership and for all that you do to help educate our most precious resource, our children. We will see you at the Innovative Ideas Institute in June.

David Mathis
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Developing Teacher-Leaders — The Rugby Way!
How Technological Innovation Is Empowering a New Breed of Educators

Dr. Julie Jones and Dr. Thomas McDaniel

Thirty years ago, Harvard Business Review published a seminal article by Hirotaka Takeuchi and Ikujiro Nonaka titled “The New Product Development Game.” It was published during an era of transformation for the business world when there were major breakthroughs with automobiles, copiers, and computers. Recently discussed on the podcast, Question of the Day, this “holistic” concept uses a rugby approach in the competitive business world to promote fast-paced change in ways that “the old sequential approach…simply won’t get the job done” (p.1). Takeuchi and Nonaka’s proposal holds surprisingly current ideas for contemporary educational leaders as we accomplish similar breakthroughs to promote educational innovation.

The profession of education is witnessing the rise of teacher-leaders, thanks to a growing collaborative movement on social media. Twitter, Google Plus, and Edmodo are a few of the platforms on which modern educators are reaching out for professional development, independently seeking inspiration and solutions with peer professionals through the building of a personal learning network (PLN). Some act alone as rogue innovators, while others are encouraged to join the movement by district initiatives such as scheduled “Twitter chats” within the organization.

Such PLN initiatives require the same kind of “rugby” principles as the two business experts describe in their article. Unlike the old sequential steps—where, like a relay race, specialists pass the baton from one group to the next—the rugby approach employs multidisciplinary teams with team members working together from start to finish. Takeuchi and Nonaka outline six principles underlying this “management by rugby” concept that “fit together like a jigsaw puzzle, forming a fast flexible process for new product development” (p.1). Below we present those principles with suggested application to the emerging leadership approach that embraces and empowers teachers as leaders who might profit from this “holistic method.”

Principle #1— Built-in instability

Traditional leadership models have advocated “teacher proofing” strategies for districts to minimize instability; these one-size-fits-all curricular models and standardized testing have been the staples of most public schools over the last few decades. Social media is changing such assumptions and giving more support to teacher initiatives. By not explicitly crafting goals for each teacher, administrators demonstrate trust in teacher autonomy. This built-in instability allows teacher-leaders to experience purposeful disequilibrium—the element of tension being created by the question: How should we best utilize the tools before us? Consider this observation by Dyane Smokorowski (@mrs_smoke), Kansas’ 2013 state teacher of the year:

As a passionate educator for global collaborative projects, social media has been my easy-button communication line to classrooms around the world. Before social media, I was scouring the web for hours trying to find possible project partner classrooms in other countries. The options were minimal to say the least. Now, I simply create a graphic displaying the type of collaboration I need to make such as a classroom-to-classroom discussion or schools wanting to join our Awesome Squiggles Global Art Exchange http://awesomesquiggles.weebly.com and share it with the world. I’ve gone from a handful of classroom connections to now hundreds within a few keystrokes. My students and I talk with children all over the world and have created some lifelong friendships. It’s life changing for all of us.

Principle #2—Self-organizing project teams

Innovation produces good ideas. Steve Jobs, digital innovator and CEO of Apple, Inc. and Pixar Animation Studios, believed good ideas occur when people mingle. He encouraged staff to get out of their offices and interact; he believed serendipitous exchanges fueled innovation (Isaacson, 2011). It is not surprising, then, that new research suggests having a diverse professional social media network exposes one to new people and ideas, thus creating the tendency to generate better ideas (Parise, Whelan, & Todd, 2015). Membership in these teams is no longer limited to the organization or the confining walls of the school. By reaching across traditional boundaries, teacher-leaders foster creativity through the power of communicating with other professionals and by collaborating with them to find solutions to common problems. The following examples show how teacher-leaders have harnessed the power of social media to create self-organized project teams, meet classroom needs, and go beyond the traditional classroom mindset:

South Carolina educator, Jed Dearybury (@mrdearybury) had a project about to expire on Donor’s
Choose (http://www.donorschoose.org/). With three days left for funding, he posted the project on Twitter with the tag @donorschoose. A lady in Washington state saw this tweet and added it to a Donors Choose giving page she had created. She asked her friends to give to the project in honor of her birthday. Within three hours of Jed’s original tweets, the project was funded and $450 worth of National Geographic Atlases were on their way to his 2nd graders.

Steve Auslander (@sau slander), 5th grade educator in Indianapolis, has his students connect with authors using Twitter. During a recent Global Read Aloud, his students were reading “Fish in a Tree,” written by Lynda Mullaly-Hunt. They worked together to create a game based on the book using the app, Heads Up. Auslander recorded the students playing the game and tweeted the video to both the book’s author, Lynda, and to the creator of the “Global Read Aloud, Pernille Ripp.” It took just a few days, but his students were able to play Fish in a Tree Heads Up over Skype with both of them.

As these examples demonstrate, project teams can connect teachers—and their students—in novel projects. Both teachers and students become excited and energized as they discover new ways to advance learning.

**Principal #3—Overlapping development phases**

In a relay race, teams are organized by a coach. Runners have little say in how these decisions are made. In a rugby match, players may come and go from the field based on their contributions to the game. With a teacher-leader mindset, schools may have a number of self-organized teams, with members coming and going as their expertise is needed. Phases of progress overlap as questions arise and new solutions are found.

When grade-level teachers want to integrate music and visual arts into their classroom, the teachers invite specialists to the table, collaborating to maximize student learning. This collaboration is nothing new; educators have been collaborating within the building for many years. What is evolving is the global connection of multiple specialists to the curriculum planning process:

Amy Storer (@techamys), a math and science educator in Texas, had her eyes opened to the power of social media in the classroom at a state conference. At first apprehensive, Amy is grateful for her decision to “go for it,” saying her class Twitter account has since changed the dynamic in her classroom. Recently, Amy reached out to Kevin Honeycutt (@kevin honeycutt), who gave the idea for students to build a self-sustaining garden on Mars that would allow them to survive for 5 years. Her students have created a video to share with Nasa, which they are preparing to share on Twitter this month. They plan to tag @NASA in the tweet.

Several developments emerge simultaneously while others are still developing, and this is the “new normal” in innovative classrooms like Mrs. Storer’s.

**Principal #4—Multilearning**

Because teacher-leaders are connected, participating in weekly chats with educators across the globe, they can respond quickly to new ideas. These teacher-leaders know first-hand when innovation begins to occur, see the rise in its popularity, and can test ideas in their own classroom before the unconnected teacher reads about it in a professional text. Today, phrases such as #GoogleCardboard, #Wonderopolis, #GeniusHour, and #MakerSpace are trending on Twitter. By the time this article is published and reaches the traditional user, these topics will likely have spread to the mainstream classroom.

Takeuchi and Nonaka’s approach identifies two dimensions of multilearning: 1) multiple levels, and 2) multiple functions. When teacher-leaders collaborate with other educators, they gain inspiration from multiple levels of influence (often global) and education as a profession becomes its own problem-based learning experience.

It is cognitively messy, and teacher-leaders experience disequilibrium as they reach out of their comfort zone across curricular subject lines, thus working within multiple functions. Here is the experience of one South Carolina teacher:

Josh Shepard (@joshua_shepard) began using Twitter as
a source for professional learning in April of 2015. Through his global connections, Josh discovered a product called Swivl (@goswivl). Swivl is an automated robotic accessory for the iPad that allows teachers to self-record their lessons using wireless microphones and movement tracking technology. In Oconee County School District, seminars and model lessons are recorded and shared; principals and instructional leaders use these recordings to facilitate conversations and learning. Implementing the Swivl device has helped to provide teachers with a substantial amount of quality professional development and self-reflection. By participating in a simple Twitter chat, Josh was exposed to an idea that went on to transform education in his district.

Classroom innovation and learning—which now in classrooms like Shepard’s emphasizes multiple levels of learning—is fostered by “doing.” This doing is no longer an expectation only for students. The teacher-leader now leads by learning alongside his or her students. This kind of innovation in a school creates a climate for organizational transition. Classroom doors are open, questions are encouraged, and the learner-shift occurs. This is multilearning at its best.

Principal #5—Subtle control

Administrators need not fear that their role is disappearing; rather, the trust instilled in their team of teacher-leaders simply makes their role as the lead-learner more practical. The principal is not losing his or her control; rather this administrator exercises a more nuanced, subtle control by way of careful listening to teachers and respectful support of worthy new approaches in the classroom. Power shared is power increased. Consider this example of one such administrator:

Dr. Tony Sinanis (@TonySinanis) describes himself as a lead-learner at Cantiague Elementary in Jericho, NY. His principalship embraces the notion of democratic and distributed leadership. Dr. Sinanis writes in his blog, “This approach to leadership is basically a MUST in the current landscape of public education because the principal is expected to be a transformative leader who successfully manages and balances instructional leadership responsibilities with the countless administrative tasks and expectations.” Dr. Sinanis asks these questions of his team:

- Do our teachers feel supported, empowered, and trusted?
- Do our teachers have opportunities to assume leadership roles?
- Do our teachers know that taking risks and failing is considered a good thing?
- Do we provide a forum for our teachers to share their ideas and eventually put them into action?

These are the questions all principals might want to ask their administrative teams. Although teacher-leaders and their project teams are largely on their own, they do not operate without structure. In fact, an administrative model embracing the teacher-leader has been followed in some European schools, in Greece particularly, for the past several years (Natsiopoulou & Giouroukakis, 2010). In the democratic and distributed leadership model, teachers share administrative control and the principal is the metaphorical orchestra conductor, helping administrators and faculty grapple with balancing their roles, responsibilities, and commitments. The result is subtle control within the building and across project teams, thereby achieving long-lasting school improvement.

Principal #6—Organizational transfer of learning

There is much chatter today about the 21st century skills needed by students in a dynamic and change-oriented society. We have shiny new iPads and Chromebooks
dotting our counters and charging stations. We point at the device and say, “Look at my innovation!” As these gadgets accumulate, we must ask how much of this innovative shift is the tool and how much is the pedagogy? Are our students thinking differently, or are educators doing much of the thinking for them?

Meg Campbell (@thenewhascome), a teacher-leader in upstate South Carolina, says connecting with teachers around the globe has shaped her classroom pedagogy. In Campbell’s classroom, students use Padlet to collaborate on book reviews. This medium of sharing thoughts about a text forces Campbell’s students to think about their audience (their peers) and thus how the world can view their work. The shared workspace concept adds a meaningful dimension to the learning process that wasn’t there before and helps students transfer from learning about technology to using tech to create thoughtful book reviews.

To encourage teacher-leaders, organizations need to ask difficult questions of themselves and their faculty. Are we using these new methods, these new products, these new ideas to shift the agency for learning to the learners themselves? With all the shiny, new approaches (flipped, project-based, blended, etc.) are we improving teaching and intensifying learning? How effectively are we helping students with the challenges of transferring of knowledge—from the video game and the iPad to the world of work, research, and higher education? After all, schools have always been about the transfer of learning, and now the world of technology provides opportunities to transfer learning to students in ways that will prepare them for the future, preparing them, in the final analysis, to be lifelong learners.

Mike Soskil (@msoskil), a top-ten finalist for the 2016 Global Teacher Prize (http://www.globalteacherprize.org/), and head teacher at Wallenpaupack South Elementary School in PA says of his PLN:

In a world where it is free and easy to connect with anyone from around the world at any time, teachers who wish to remain relevant must have a network which allows them to learn and be inspired from educators outside their local area. For me, building a PLN changed my career. As someone who is constantly looking for ways to improve my teaching, finding a place where hundreds of thousands of teachers were willing to share their best practices with me, give me feedback, and support me when I tried new ideas in my classroom was the catalyst I needed. Surrounding yourself with excellent teachers, however, can at times be challenging. There are often times when I feel inferior when I read about teachers doing amazing things with their students and creating incredible learning experiences. When things aren’t going well, or you’ve had a bad day, it’s easy to allow this feeling to turn into self-doubt and for you to lose confidence. We must overcome this and stop comparing ourselves to other teachers. Competition is the enemy of collaboration. At times when I begin to have these feelings, I try to remember the reasons why I am a teacher and find something to do with my students the next day that makes me feel that I am fulfilling that mission. Even the small miracles that happen in our classrooms every day change lives.

Mr. Soskil’s comments exemplify the essence of the goals of a rugby-style management: empowering teachers to work with others, connecting globally, and developing the teacher-leader. This revisited and re-purposed 30-year-old business concept is now the business of 21st century education.

References

Authors
Dr. Julie Jones
Dr. Thomas McDaniel
Finding My Voice in the First Year

Sharidan-Blake Parnell

Leadership. I have never known of a nobler, more important trait to have in the field of education. Many would say that leaders are individuals who are an inspiration to you and your character. Others may describe leaders as those who take charge for the good of everyone. To a first-year teacher, leadership has a meaning that extends beyond these descriptions. I am on a journey to realizing my potential as a leader.

I am in my induction year as a teacher. My school district provides support for first-year teachers through mentorship. It is through this process, and my graduate courses about teacher leadership, that I am forming my definition of leadership. However, can a first-year teacher be a leader?

Through the mentorship program in my school district, I have been paired with a teacher on the same grade level that I teach. What I expected from my mentor was that she would provide advice for me to use in my classroom and then I would try all that she offered. To my surprise, my mentor welcomed suggestions from me, the induction-year teacher. While she offered a lot of advice about content and classroom management, she encouraged me to speak up if I had any ideas to share with the team. It was refreshing to know that my team supports my input into our plans each week. In reading about the experiences in mentorship in other schools in the U.S., I came across an experience highlighted by Marsha Sowell in her publication “Effective Practices for Mentoring Beginning Middle School Teachers: Mentor’s Perspectives”. From Sowell’s (2017) study of mentorship programs across the country, she concluded that “Effective mentoring increases teacher retention, develops teaching expertise and confidence, reduces isolation, and fosters beginning teachers’ reflection and development.” (p.129) My experience with a mentor has been positive because of the trust that we have built with each other and the open line of communication and welcoming atmosphere, which has been a source of encouragement in my first year.

Through my district’s mentorship program, induction teachers are required to attend monthly induction seminars. During the seminars, we meet with the other induction teachers in our subject areas to talk about our experiences. We also receive information and training within our subject areas. One seminar that I enjoyed was about the support services in our district. These services are for students with disabilities or students with IEPs and 504s. All teachers should be aware of these services and should know how to locate them within their school districts because of the needs of their students. It is also important for us to know the educational needs of our students so that we can direct them to the services that will effectively support them. Before beginning her presentation, she asked each of the induction teachers to introduce themselves and share one celebration or challenge that we have overcome or are working to overcome since the beginning of school. It was nice to see that she cared about how we were doing in our first year and, for the challenges that we were overcoming, the speaker and other induction teachers offered advice to consider. I was amazed at how we were all contributing to teacher leadership through our support of each other. I am thankful to be a part of a school district that is focused on the well-being of their teachers.

My first year of teaching has brought a few challenges. I found myself feeling overwhelmed when setting up the guided reading groups in my classroom. Our team met with our school’s interventionists to create our groups. I was responsible for appropriately placing my students based on data into reading groups on their level. At the time, I did not have much experience leading a guided reading group. I had so many questions about book choices for my groups, lesson planning for each group, and how to determine if my students were ready to progress to the next level. I left the meeting feeling confused, discouraged, and uncertain about how I was going to help my students succeed.

After the meeting, I was stopped by my school’s reading coach to check in on how I felt about beginning reading groups the next week. I told her that I was not sure I was ready and needed help creating the groups in my class. I learned that she and my mentor planned for me to observe a guided reading lesson and one-on-one intervention so that I was prepared to begin groups the next week. The feeling of relief that came over me was wonderful! After observing both settings, I felt prepared to lead guided reading groups.

As I am still integrating myself into the curriculum that I am teaching, I am noticing more of what my students can do and areas in which they need more support. I am also noticing the differences in performance of my students in guided reading and guided math. The needs of my students vary in so many ways and I feel as if I am still getting to know them. Meanwhile, I am concerned that I am not finding their “best fit” as quickly as needed, and I do not want them to be adversely affected. It is this instance that sparked my realization of what it means to be a “teacher...
This year, I have learned that even I, a first-year teacher, have a voice and the power to change how my students learn. Mistakes are inevitable, but I have learned more from my mistakes than my successes. Leaders are not perfect and know that they still can learn a lot from others. There are times when knowing I can speak up in advocacy frightens me, but only because I sometimes forget how powerful my voice really is. I believe that becoming a teacher leader is going to shape my life in this profession as well as how I serve my students and I can’t wait to see my growth. The support I have received this year has helped me in many ways and I only hope to help other induction-year teachers to realize their voice in the future.

References

Author
Sharidan-Blake Parnell
Personalized Learning in Action
An Interview with Marie Watson, Principal, Red Bank Elementary, Lexington 1 and Lauren Vann, Teacher Leader at Red Bank

Conducted by Dr. Joe Flora, Clinical Professor, College of Education, University of South Carolina

Flora: There are several definitions of personalized learning, Lauren. Which aspects of personal learning do you use in your classroom?

Vann: Personalized learning is a loaded term. But for me, it’s just making sure that each of my students are on their own personal plan. They’re using learning planners and they’re setting goals and they’re determining what’s going to be the best way for them to master a certain skill. We really work together to first build the transparency: What is mastery going to look like? It’s backwards design: There is where I need to be; how am I going to get there? It looks different for every student.

Flora: Marie, as a principal, how do you facilitate personalized learning for your teachers and parents?

Watson: That is also a loaded question! That has been a journey. With parents, we try to get them to start thinking about the same questions that we have as educators. For example, why do we go to school during the months that we do, and why are we out for the summer? Why does a child have to be in 1st grade because he or she is six? What does a “B” on a report card tell you about what a child can read? And why should a child have to wait for everyone else to learn the next thing, or go on when they haven’t learned something yet?

We just engaged parents with the same questions we were asking ourselves, things that made us come to the conclusion that education needed to be changed.

With teachers, that’s a different story because they had to be in the trenches doing the work. That’s a complete shift in the way things have been done. For instance, with the personalized learning that we do, we believe transparency is critical. Teachers have to understand what the standards are in order to know what it looks like when a student has mastered a skill. You have to treat teachers just like you do students: They are not all at the same place at the same time. You want to push them gently, but not scare them to death or threaten them. You’ve got to give teachers a place where they can take risks, because this model has not been laid out. In education heretofore, the teachers had a curriculum guide, they had a textbook, and they followed those. In this kind of model, they can’t just rely on that. So it’s been a difficult journey, but one where teachers in my school have grown professionally more than they ever would have imagined.

Flora: Speaking of training, Lauren, how did you get started and who influenced you to be where you are today?

Vann: Well, when I came to Red Bank, I came from a traditional model. I’d heard a little bit about what they were trying to do, but I wasn’t really familiar with all the work it was going to take. Thankfully, I was on a very strong team that had really taken it to heart, and they believed in what they were doing. They started sharing experiences they’d had with students: It’s that feel good moment you get as a teacher that everyone looks for, when a student who doesn’t normally experience success starts gaining momentum.

I had a pretty challenging group that year, and I knew since the first week that it was going to be tough going. Ms. Watson has this saying that we’re all preforgiven, and she makes that very clear from the beginning. As long as you’re doing what’s in the best interest of the student, and in heart you feel it’s right, then you’re preforgiven if it flops.

I talked to one of the girls on my team who had a practice menu and that’s where I started. That’s giving students choices in how they work on skills that I’ve already introduced to them. I noticed that they started to take ownership of it. They were asking me, Can I practice this way instead? Then we looked at choices when it came to assessment. It was a lot to manage, and I needed some way to track it. It just started naturally unfolding. I started using a data wall. One of the most overwhelming pieces for teachers is How do I manage this all? My answer is, you don’t manage it yourself. You put most of the work on the
student. You train them, and once they realize they can do it themselves they really lean on each other.

It’s really collaborate. Students will say, She’s mastered rounding three digit numbers, so let me go talk to her because my teacher’s working one-on-one with someone else right now. It’s an open environment for everyone to share their strengths. What’s really cool about it is that those students who aren’t used to experiencing success start experiencing it. They become more confident in their skills.

**Flora:** Marie, based on what Lauren just said, from your perspective, what are the main challenges of PL for teachers and principals?

**Watson:** I think the greatest challenge for teachers is that it seems overwhelming: How do I manage all this at once? What I’ve also found is that teachers might think they understand it in their heads. It’s easy for them to think I’m doing this because I’m differentiating, rather than meeting the needs of every single child where they are. The hardest part for teachers is just knowing how to break the process down into steps that work for them and their students.

As an administrator, and in my conversations with other administrators, I think the hardest part is letting go. A lot of principals want to kind of manage everything and have the lesson plans. One of the things I always say around here is that we have to be what we want our students to become. I talk to my teachers about letting it go and letting the students own it. Administrators have to do the same thing. High quality work still has to be in place, and deep thinking, etc. All of those things apply, but they apply in a different way. So as an administrator, you have to work through these things. You also don’t know all the answers, you have to know the right questions to ask and lean into those, along with your faculty. No one can do this alone; it takes an entire team working together.

**Vann:** When I came here, I had heard about what was happening and I was excited and I understood it, but at the same time, I felt like: What? I have to send them to choose what they’re going to do? As a teacher operating in the traditional model, it was scary for me. But when you take the leap, you realize how magical it is.

**Flora:** It sounds to me as though, Marie, that you’ve developed a culture of personalized learning, rather than a program. It’s a way of school life, rather than something you imposed upon the teachers.

**Watson:** That’s correct. You hit it on the head. It has to be a change in the culture of your entire school, with your students, staff, and parents. It’s exciting once you see that you’ve let go. For instance, I was so excited when Lauren came and I was able to watch her unfold all this and figure out ways to put it together. It was continuous improvement and the students were doing it right along with her. What better lesson can they learn? Who assesses that? That’s life: This isn’t right, this isn’t working, let me try this way, I’ve gotta change it up. That’s what someone wants in a business setting.

**Vann:** The team aspect is very cool. I always thought I had this great community in a traditional mode, because we had a morning meeting and we talked about how our weekends were. That’s great, but real community is when a student can say, Hey, I don’t think it’s working that we track our learning like this, what if we try it this way? and we have a class discussion about it. If they’re not coming up with ways to problem solve on their own, we’re doing them a disservice.

**Watson:** Related to that, from the teacher’s point of view, this past year we conducted learning walks, for us to see how are we doing in creating this kind of culture where students learn at their own pace. We established that there was no judgment in any way, that we just wanted to figure out where we are and what to do next. We’re all involved in the work together and that is critical, because otherwise you have more pushback. I currently don’t feel we have any pushback in our school, which is amazing!

**Flora:** Have any teachers left over this?

**Watson:** I’m not so sure, but when we interview, we are clear that this is what you’re expected to do.

**Flora:** How would you say that personalized learning influences school outcomes on standardized test scores?

**Watson:** I think there is a misalignment, for one thing. We’re still measuring for a traditional model of school. That makes it quite difficult. Obviously our improvement should show in the data. We haven’t gotten our past data back yet, our SC Ready, so I don’t know yet about this year.
I think students should be able to take end of grade level assessments when they’re ready to take them. They’re on the computer now, so why do we keep having to give them at the same time? If we’re really going to move forward, we need to do that. I was recently asked “How can you use data if your teachers don’t get assessments at the same time?” I said, that’s an excellent question, that’s why you have to understand how to show mastery, that’s why you have to have rubrics and scales. The work is so comprehensive, so detailed, that there is nothing it does not touch. Can you tell I’m passionate about this?

Flora: How do you and your staff find enough time to implement this?

Watson: Time is an issue. The state allows some waivers for particular things, and we are hoping to be one of their pilot models for competency based personalized learning. One of the things they’re very particular about is the number of days the student goes to school.

A few years ago, I surveyed all of my parents about giving teachers a full day rather than a few hours of collaborative planning six times a year. I had the approval of the parents and presented that to the state department. But they wouldn’t let us take a whole day away. We’ve been down a lot of avenues to try to help with that, because it is time demanding. We’re a Title 1 school, so I designated four days where we were able to get a substitute, and teachers were able to work together then.

During those days, I don’t mandate what they do. We reserve every Thursday during their planning time and we help with the logistics: How do you use the reporting and tracking systems that we have? We created a Google Doc where teachers record what they’re doing, and they share with me when they’ve added to it.

I’ve realized the teachers would rather sit in a meeting for thirty minutes and hear everything at once rather than get a ton of emails. Just as with the teacher’s long range plan, neither can I sit down at the beginning of the year and say, This is our long term plan for professional learning. We have to be fluid to maximize time.

Vann: One of the simplest things that you wouldn’t think would make a difference is that we’re literally knocking down walls. In our math block, my team teacher and I share all of our students for every subject. If I notice Johnny is still struggling with a concept I just got done working on with him, I can grab that teacher right there, and ask if she could try it with him. We have constant communication throughout the day. We don’t wait until the end of the week to see what we should do next week.

Watson: Going back to state assessments: How are we measuring creativity? We see so much creativity in the things students produce the ideas that they come up with to help the school environment.

There are so many things we want in people other than being able to memorize material and repeat it on an assessment. I wish that those things could be measured in some kind of way, because there’s wonderful work in those areas here and there’s no way to report it, other than in the most important way, which is in that child’s life.

Flora: What about technology? Some people say you can’t have personalized learning without it. Do you agree?

Vann: Technology is a great tool, and I can’t imagine personalized learning without it. We are one to one with iPads here. But I think there’s this misconception with personalized learning, and how it’s different from online learning. The difference is that in a competency based personalized learning system, everything we do is intentional. We’re not just sticking them on a program, we are looking daily at what they’ve done on a program and we’re pinpointing which skill they need more work on, and we’re assigning from that. The iPad has made it much easier to set up a trajectory for each student.

Watson: That question comes up a lot in education. But would you ask a doctor or a banker or anyone professional to think about doing their work without technology today? You certainly can do this without one to one devices, because students can access a computer. Just as with any organization, the goal is to have multiple pathways built out, so that the student doesn’t have to wait for the teacher to give him any lesson. They can get on a computer anywhere and see what it is they’re supposed to do and go to work. Much of the work is not on the computer—it’s with a real book in your hand, or with a pencil and paper. You may upload it if you type it, but in our primary grades, often the
Personalized Learning in Action

Continued

student uses the iPad to take a photograph, say, of what they’ve created out of clay or the letters they have to know. It’s a fantastic tool, but students do not have to have one to one devices to do personalized learning.

But again, I say, who today does work without technology? No one.

Vann: Much of our management really requires those iPads at least, so the student can submit their work and receiving feedback. When they’re building a structure to show volume, for instance, they can take a picture of that. It’s not necessarily all on the iPad, it’s: How can I capture this moment and get feedback on it if my teacher’s not there to watch me do it? They could take a video of their sculpture and I can look at it later and give specific feedback on what I noticed. That’s been really powerful.

Watson: The main thing about the device is that it breaks down the literal walls and students can learn anything, anywhere, and show evidence of it anytime. They see something that shows what they learned in science when they see ants doing something, for instance, and they can write about it and submit it. It allows that personalization to flourish.

Flora: You said you’re a Title 1 school. Do you have any comments on how personalized learning might be ideal for a student from a disadvantaged background?

Watson: Well, I could probably write a book about that. Very often, children from poverty backgrounds don’t feel like they have a voice. The best thing about it for anyone is that we are saying: It’s OK. You’re where you are with your learning. We’re going to meet you where you are, and we’re going to help you go further. Unfortunately, a lack of achievement often goes along with poverty. The student already feels as though he’s failed before he’s even begun. So if it’s OK to be where you are, and the teacher is going to help you, the students realize, Hey, all of us are at a different place on this, and that’s just the way things are around here. The wonderful thing about it is that students start kindergarten and they soon realize that we all learn at different rates and that we’re all good at some things and not as good at other things. They think nothing of it.

It’s not the students who have a problem with the transparency, where we have a wall showing where each student stands. The kids don’t really have a problem with that, because they know they can help each other, and that it simply represents what they’re working on. It’s a bigger shift for the adults than it is for the children.

Vann: I get a little teary thinking about these students living in poverty and what they’re dealing with at home. It must be so stressful to deal with pressures at home, and then come to school feeling like a failure. My students who were struggling from day one when I started this journey, now realize that they can overcome their circumstances. They recognize that I can do this, I just have to do it a little differently. We always talk about how You’re just not there yet, and I think that’s a really important philosophy.

Watson: Students become empowered. Maybe they’re not the best math student or the best reading student, but they feel empowered and they become leaders in other ways. They come up with wonderful ideas. I’m thinking about a student named Riley and Thankful Thursday. She came up with a plan where on Thursdays, students submit names of other students or adults, anyone, who has been helpful to someone else. That became a part of our news show every week, and she gave them a certificate and a coupon. The students feel empowered to have ideas, to make changes, and to do things for others.

Vann: Our charity fair is something awesome we’ve done. About three years ago, students started making things to sell them in order to give money to charity. It was great, but I think Ms. Watson was feeling bombarded.

Watson: They would come to me and say, We want to set up in the lobby in the morning. They had made multicolored paper wallets and wanted to sell them for 25 cents and give the money to the Special Olympics. Those girls made about $200. But then of course, other kids saw this and wanted to sell things, and it got to be more than I could manage. Some students wanted to sell things and pocket it: entrepreneurs!

We turned that into a charity fair, where students can submit an application for what they’d like to sell. We’ve had up to 70 students making things, and then on a designated day, we have a sale. The entire student body votes on which charity they want to support. There’s nothing that scores that, there’s nowhere to report that, but students learn about giving back. It all comes from their ideas.
When I was in graduate school, I read a book that I loved, called The Power of Their Ideas, by Deborah Meier. It resonated so much with me. It was the same idea, that students can be empowered and engaged in learning when they have choices they can apply to their interests. That’s key to this whole process: The choices and the empowerment.

Flora: Is there anything you’d like to bring up that we haven’t talked about?

Watson: We’ve determined the things that are essential to a personalized learning environment. I mentioned transparency so students can know when they’re ready to move on to the next thing. There really has to be goal setting. And we have to track the learning. That goes with the transparency. They have to know where they’re going next. Transparency, tracking, pathways: that all fits together.

You have to have a shared vision as a school, and you need to involve students, parents, staff, and everybody in creating that. Every classroom unit needs a shared vision, a code of cooperation: This is the way we work in here. And they have to reflect against it. They have to look at it every afternoon and say, Did we follow our code today?

It’s also critical that you have some sort of character development. At our school, we use Stephen Covey’s seven habits and now there are eight. To have a student who is self directed, which goes right into this personalized competency based model, she has to learn how to work in that kind of environment.

There are the pieces that you have to have to replace the old model of lesson plans, and pacing guides.

Vann: I think, too, in the classroom, making sure there is a sense of urgency and maintaining high expectations is important. Goals have to be time based. When I started out I had my students setting goals and working at their own pace, but at the end of the day, it was my responsibility to expose them to certain material.

When I took a curriculum class at USC last year, I had to write a post answering the question: What would your ideal classroom be like? Of course I had the literature support that you should differentiate instruction, so my ideal classroom would be my classroom now. I didn’t specifically state that, that is what I was describing, I just painted a picture of what my class is like. Some classmates commented on it and said, That’s nice, but that could never happen, and wouldn’t that be nice if there were eight of us?

It reminded me how one of the questions I was asked when I interviewed for my job here, was: If there were no parameters, what would your classroom look like? Of course I had the literature support that you should differentiate instruction, so my ideal classroom would be my classroom now. I didn’t specifically state that, that is what I was describing, I just painted a picture of what my class is like. Some classmates commented on it and said, That’s nice, but that could never happen, and wouldn’t that be nice if there were eight of us?

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Rally Around Quality Teachers...Have an Evaluation System with a Recognition Program!

Hans A. Andrews, EdD

Recognition of our best teachers! It is an exhilarating experience for the teacher, his or her students, the other teachers who work hard every day to assist their students and to the family and friends of the teacher who receives such an honor.

Such recognition is still more of a dream for over 85-90 percent of our K-12 teachers. The Gordon S. Black Corporation in 1999 found recognition of excellence in teaching to be one of the top three drivers of satisfaction among teachers nationally. In a large group of 23,569 teachers surveyed only 50 percent identified that a recognition program existed in their school! (Teachers recognized for ... 1999).

How is it that administrators, teacher unions and governing boards have neglected for so long to realize the important of recognition as a motivator for teachers to keep improving their teaching?

Evaluation with accountable outcomes

As a school teacher and administrator working in both K-12 and community college systems, it has been my experience over the years that teacher evaluation, if properly conducted, can provide the number one impact to increasing quality teaching and student learning outcomes in our school systems. Teacher evaluation needs to produce a number of accountable outcomes such as (1) recognition awards and public awareness of the high quality of the best teachers; (2) assistance for those teachers needing support to improve; and (3) the means and support to place some of the weakest teachers into a remediation program and if that fails (4) support dismissal steps and action (Andrews, 2004).

An earlier study by the National School Board Association (1987) in their monograph found one area of agreement that surfaced out of all the programs of evaluation and recognition that they reviewed: They found the process of evaluation of teachers must be perceived as being fair, objective and comprehensive by each of the participants.

Other necessities that were listed in evaluation practices included: (1) classroom observation; (2) measurement of student achievement; and (3) examination of records. The most used process found was that of classroom observation by administrators (p.24).

The awards and recognition limitations that exist

There is a motivational effect to be gained from recognition given to outstanding teachers or teacher groups within a highly successful school environment. Some of the outcomes include boosting self-esteem, inspiring teachers to work harder, renewing confidence in their teaching and spotlighting areas of expertise.

It is through a school’s attention to recognition of excellent teaching that a school may be better able to attract new teachers, encourage others to enter teaching and to make teaching a highly visible positive profession which it has been over the years.

Recognition is one of the developmental needs of teachers as it is for persons in most other fields of work. They thrive on recognition when they have been putting forth high quality efforts to educate their students. Recognition should also be an outcome of an evaluation system that is respected both by teachers and administrators and their governing boards.

Recognition programs that do exist often do little to impact the greatest number of excellent teachers with any one school district. In studying community college recognition programs nationally, 55 percent of the responders indicated they had a recognition program for their teachers.

In probing this further, it turned out that the largest number of awards given out each year was one award. The
second and third largest numbers of awards made in a year were two and three awards.

Evans (2005) pointed out a similar problem at his university. He noted that the number of awards available in his university was very limited. He referred to his own department at California State University in Sacramento that had over 100 tenured and tenured-track teachers. The recognition plan allowed him to award one teacher a year for the Outstanding Teacher Award. His comments put this into a realistic focus:

For the sake of discussion, let’s assume that 25 percent of the faculty members are excellent teachers (I think the percentage is considerably higher). That means it would take 25 years, the length of a typical academic career, to recognize all deserving faculty members, provided that no new outstanding teachers enter the college in the meantime (p.1).

How many of our K-12 school systems have a similar situation? These examples show some of the concerns as to what is happening in both the community college and university levels. These appear to be fairly universal programs in those schools that presently have some sort of token’ recognition system. Keep in mind that this minimal number of recognition awards is only taking place in the 50 percent of the K-12 schools that have programs. It is from these figures that it is easy to project over 80-90 percent or more of the exceptional teachers in most school systems go wanting for school and public recognition and/or endorsement of their work.

**Teacher job satisfaction**

Texas lists the following as reasons why persons need to participate in nominating teachers for their Teacher of the Year program:

- Each nomination is memorable for the teacher; it boosts the teacher’s morale and validates the perceptions of students, parents and colleagues;
- ...is valuable for students who will feel great pride and joy when their teacher, or one they know is chosen;
- ...is significant for the school and faculty;
- ...is good for the community. A healthy society values education and appreciates the educators who work to ensure future generations are well-educated. (Reasons to participate in …, 2005).

**National Board Certification Studies: Early outcomes**

The National Board Certification program is an achievement earned by individual teachers and has been expanding in recent years. Recognition of this achievement is honored in numerous school districts and states with a bonus payment, higher salary and/or support in paying the costs of the process of qualifying.

In Australia a newly launched Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) program seeks to bring recognition to how important quality teaching is to the country. The first meeting of this group drew over 150 newly nationally certified teachers to Adelaide in March of 2016.

Some 600,000 students records in North Carolina by an independent research multi-year review found National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT) had increased student-learning gains more than their non-certified teaching peers. This was a three-year study of students in grades three, four and five (1996-1999).

Some of the outcomes documented in this study were:

- Teachers who achieve National Board Certificate do a measurably better job in the classroom;
- Students of NBCTs improved average of seven percent more on their year-end math and reading tests than students whose teachers attempted but failed to gain certification;
- This performance differential was most pronounced for younger and lower-income students whose gains were as high as 15 percent (Independent study…, 2004, 0.1).
Similar outcomes were found in Arizona where teachers with national board certified teachers students scored up to an additional month’s worth of learning improvements above the students in non-certified teachers’ classrooms. This study was conducted by Arizona State University (Students of National Board …, 2004).

The two major phases in this certification program are: Phase I: demonstrating subject area mastery; Phase II: showing significant student gains (Master Teacher …, 2005).

While this is a hard earned recognition-achievement there are also many other ways to recognize quality teachers.

Some historical research studies

There are some earlier studies that have made an impact in identifying the importance of recognition in motivating teachers. The Educational Research Service (ERS) in 1979 found out of 3,000 schools surveyed only 6.4 percent had tried a merit pay program. Most of the schools had dropped them for the following reasons:

- problems in figuring out how to evaluate teachers fairly;
- teachers disliked merit pay; and
- declining teacher morale;
- some schools reported their faculty had negotiated merit pay out of their contracts.

Scherer’s findings at Teachers College, Columbia University, in 1983, identified why veteran teachers had positive feelings about their work as teachers. The following are the top three listed in order of importance to the teachers surveyed:

- Receiving respect;
- Receiving recognition;
- Receiving reinforcement.

Dunwell (1986) determined that merit pay was not the answer for rewarding or recognizing teachers. Three of the myths he published regarding merit pay are as follows:

**Myth 1: Teachers favor merit pay.**

This statement contrasts with a number of findings in other studies and surveys. Teachers have been found to favor other rewards than merit pay.

**Myth 2: Money is a motivator – more money produces more work.**

Research studies did not support this. Money was only found to motivate some people in some circumstances, whose salaries were below market value.

**Myth 3: Merit pay will persuade highly qualified people to enter teaching.**

There is no research to support this. Teachers do not enter into teaching primarily to make money.

The National School Board Association (NSBA) in 1987 also weighed in on the need for teacher recognition when they determined existing pay schedules were not meeting the needs of outstanding teachers for receiving recognition for outstanding teaching. They added: The process of evaluation of teachers must be perceived as being fair, objective and comprehensive by each of the participants (p.24).

Andrews (1988) researched the North Central Association’s community colleges and summarized the key core outcome elements he found in recognition programs around the country:

- They were outgrowths of faculty evaluation systems conducted primarily by instructional administrators;
- They avoided the “merit pay” issues by offering the alternative of “recognition” to outstanding faculty;
- The faculty, administrators, and trustees or boards of education found them to be acceptable;
- They were usually based upon motivational theories of well known theorists such as Maslow (1954) and Herzberg (1966);
- They were considered successful in accomplishing the goal of improved instruction and faculty recognition for outstanding work.

**Recent movements toward merit and/or performance based pay**

In recent years there has been another ‘push’ by political leaders to provide merit pay for the best teachers. The Obama administration in the United States is pushing hard in its Race to the Top program to reward teachers with new pay incentives such as merit pay.

Australia’s Prime Minister (former Education Minister) Julia Gillard proposed support for recognition based pay for up to ten percent of their teachers each year. Her hope was to help retain top teachers in the classroom rather than have them move into administrative positions (or leave schools) as often happened then and now.

**Recent reports on merit pay**

The preliminary results of performance-pay for Chicago Public School teachers found no evidence that student scores improved in math or reading tests. The differences were not found between schools paying performance-pay and those not paying it (Education Week, June 1, 2010).
A study reported from Tennessee that 300 middle school mathematics teachers had volunteered to be part of a three-year randomized experiment program at Vanderbilt University. This study was designed to show if large monetary incentives would produce significant boosts in student scores and encourage teachers to become more effective.

The outcome of this Project on Incentives in Teaching yielded only what was referred to as ‘two small positive findings. Fifth graders in the second and third year of the experiment showed small improvements. There were no effects for the students in the grades 6-8 in any of the three years of the study (Education Week, September 21, 2010).

The National Center on Performance Incentives found the Texas Educator Excellence Grant (TEEG) did not produce the improvements in teaching that was initiated with much fanfare in 2006.

Teachers were recommended to receive between $3,000 and a maximum of $10,000 for their very top teachers. In reality, the average paid was $1,982 in year one and $2,094 in year two of the program. The program involved 50,000 teachers in 1,148 school campuses.

After reviewing the results on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills of 140,000 or more students the center concluded, “There is no systematic evidence that TEEG had an impact on student achievement gains.” The governor of Texas continued to endorse the concept of merit pay. The Texas State Teachers Association, Richard Kouri, said, “we predicted the program would be a flop, and that’s what it turned out to be” (Dallas news, November 4, 2009).

Why support recognition programs

Teachers seldom receive the types of recognition that could be offered by the governing boards, administration and the general public. Evaluation is the most significant means of determining quality teaching and recognition should be one of the outcomes achieved by teachers. If teachers are evaluated as being poor or incompetent in their teaching movement toward remediation of their defects and deficiencies need to be taken. If improvement cannot be documented with follow-up evaluations movement toward dismissal should be undertaken.

Former Education Minister Gillard, helped the government commit to improving their assessment of, and rewarding of teachers. Angelo Gavrielatos, the Australian Education Union’s president found the reports on rewarding teachers as a disappointing result. He referred to the report as illustrating “teachers feel undervalued and certainly underpaid.” He also called for “a system that gives further recognition and further reward for teachers and the sooner governments fund it, the better we’ll all be” (McDonald, T., 2010).

Jensen (2010) summarized the key points of the Grattan’s Institute study of , What Teachers Want. They included (1) improving the quality of the candidates seeking to become teachers; (2) improve the education of the teachers as they prepare to enter the profession; (3) offer continuing educational development throughout the careers of the teachers; (4) recognize effective teachers and expand their practices in schools (emphasis added) and (5) address underperformance.

Teachers in the Jensen’s study, as a group (91%) lambasted their schools and pointed out that the most effective teachers do not receive the greatest recognition, nor do they get recognition in their schools if they improved in the quality of their teaching (Grattan Institute, p. 4).

Summary: Why recognition?

It is important to listen to our teachers as they point to the deficiencies in our present evaluation systems. A very large majority in both the United States and Australia have told us that their teacher evaluation systems are weak and do not provide for accountable outcomes for the best teachers or for
those who are under performing. Recognition lacks throughout both countries in evaluation systems. Removal of the poorest teachers goes wanting and it is highly resented by teachers who work in the same school districts with them.

Recognition is a basic need of teachers as it is of persons in all other professions and work situations. Schools, state, and national leaders often see ‘merit or performance pay’ as the answer to paying and recognizing their best teachers. Yet, studies around the world have shown these merit and performance pay programs have failed over a long period of time. They have failed to show improvements in student learning outcomes and they are highly disliked by teachers.

Recognition programs, on the other hand, have become respected, and a motivator for both individual and groups of teachers. It should provide an excellent alternative for school leaders and these programs need to be greatly expanded in our educational institutions in both Australia and the United States.

References:

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Many educators first encounter the complexities of the legal system for schools and teachers when they take a course in School Law as part of a graduate degree. I have taught such a course for more than 40 years and enjoy it immensely, but students preparing for leadership roles in the public school system of our state often find such complexities daunting: so many laws, so many cases, so many confusing legal concepts! While knowing such laws, cases, and concepts is important, educators need not be lawyers-in-training to acquire the essential principles of school law that will help them navigate the legal issues they can expect to encounter in their leadership roles as school administrators.

To simplify many of the school law principles administrators should master, I use what I call “School Law doublets” as benchmarks along the way in our study of legal concepts in the U.S. Constitution, federal laws, our state constitution, state laws, and the myriad cases that impact educational policy and practice. I have identified more than 25 such doublets and use them to help students see the essence of a law or case affecting the public school. I include many of these in a text I wrote and use in my graduate course* and in the supplementary material I provide the graduate students. Below I offer a sample of such doublets with brief explanations.

**LEGAL DOUBLETS**

**Common defense/ general welfare**

One of the first legal doublets students discover in the U.S. Constitution is in Article 1, Section 8—the so-called “taxing clause” that gives the federal government power to tax citizens to support these two needs in society. These two areas (common defense and general welfare) include justification for such federal laws as the National Defense Education Act to strengthen public schools in our “race to the moon” (after the Russians’ Sputnik beat us into space the 1950s) and a range of “general welfare” laws for school support—from IDEA to No Child Left Behind (now modified to the Every Student Succeeds Act). The concept of “general welfare” is exceedingly broad, of course, and seems to justify just about any social, civil rights, or educational need federal legislators want to fund. The federal government must find Constitutional authority to tax US citizens, and this “taxing clause” is that authority.

**Establishment/ free exercise**

In the Bill of Rights (the first Ten Amendments), the U.S. Constitution’s First Amendment lists five freedoms, starting with freedom of religion. Congress (and by extension state government as well) cannot pass any laws that “establish” religion or show preference of one religion over another, nor may government prohibit the “free exercise” of a student’s religion in public institutions like schools. This doublet has spawned a legion of cases to define and clarify what these two principles actually mean in practice. Study of religion is permissible but requiring or permitting public school schools to have required Bible reading, prayers, or other “worship” activities has been ruled by the U.S. Supreme Court to violate the “establishment” clause. What about moments of silence? Posting the Ten Commandments in classrooms? Off-campus religious programs for academic credit (see, for example the Moss v. Spartanburg County District Seven case)? The South Carolina law, Act 331, permitting students to give brief religiously-oriented talks at commencement or football games? Religious clubs (like The Fellowship of Christian Athletes) on school grounds during or after school? Courses in comparative religion? Creation Science in biology courses? What if students want to read their Bibles in study hall? And that is just a short list of “establishment” and “free exercise” issues that have been decided in courts!

**Probable cause/ reasonable suspicion**

In the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, citizens are guaranteed freedom from “unreasonable search and seizure.” But what constitutes an “unreasonable” search?
Do the police and educators have the same limitations when they want to conduct a search of students? The police standard of “probable cause” is much higher than the “reasonable suspicion” standard for educators established in the landmark New Jersey v. TLO case in 1985. Still, in an era where some states ban strip searches of students by way of state laws and where some school districts allow drug testing of athletes (and others), many cases end up in a federal court to determine just what is “reasonable.” What about locker searches? Car searches? Desks and backpacks? Pockets and purses? May a teacher require ALL the students in a class to empty their pockets on their desks if she finds five dollars missing from her desk? May a teacher search a cell phone the teacher believes may have evidence of drug dealing? What are “reasonable” limitations for searches by “alert dogs”? (see, for example, the 2003 Goose Creek case in South Carolina). This Fourth Amendment doublet has generated an amazing number of school law cases for educators to examine and analyze.

**Equal protection/due process**

Moving on down the U.S. Constitution, we encounter another important legal doublet in the Fourteenth Amendment, a post-Civil War addition that restricts state governments from passing any law that deprives any citizen of “life, liberty, or property” without “due process of law” or denies any person “equal protection” of the law. This measure was designed to prevent Southern states from violating rights of newly emancipated slaves but applies to ALL citizens in given “suspect classes”—race, religion, disability, gender, or sexual orientation (an especially important issue in an era of transgender restroom legislation and gay marriage). Poverty per se has been ruled to be outside this “suspect class” (an issue in the 2014 Abbeville case), and gender has a lower level of “scrutiny” than race because women are different from men (see the 1996 U.S. v. Virginia case regarding admission of women to single gender VMI or The Citadel). Due process (which involves the doublet of substantive/procedural protections) becomes an issue for educators when students are suspended or expelled or when teachers are discharged or decertified, and states have specific laws in place to give guidance to educators when these matters arise—as they often do. Charges of “reverse discrimination,” college admissions quotas for minorities, and busing have all tested these doublet concepts. The Tenth Amendment “reserves” education as a state power, but the Fourteenth Amendment limits that power to ensure due process and equal protection for educators AND students.

**Per se defamation/pro quod defamation**

While the four legal doublets above illustrate the usefulness of the “doublet approach” in simplifying school law for educators in terms of Constitutional issues, this concept applies to other aspects of law as well. For sexual harassment cases I use the doublet of hostile work environment/ quid pro quo; educator contracts also lend themselves well to doublet contrasts in expressed/ implied and written/oral agreements. With torts (civil wrongs rather than criminal ones), a good example comes from the area of defamation of character—slander/libel—with the doublet per se/pro quod: a distinction between defamation that is per se, presumed to be defamatory “on its face,” or pro quod, which depends on the context of the oral or written statement in question (see the Goodwin v. Kennedy and the Abbeville Chapter of C.A.F.E case in 2001). In per se cases, false statements (harming the reputation of the plaintiff and communicated to a third party) that allege such “wrongs” as criminal offenses, loathsome diseases professional incompetency or immorality are hard to defend while pro quod statements require more proof of actual harm that they are totally false, that they are not mere opinion, and that the defendant intended to harm another’s reputation. That is a more difficult case to win.

**CONCLUSION**

These are but a few of the many examples that can be used to simplify (but not obscure) complicated legal principles. Legal doublets abound in Federal and state constitutions and laws; S, C. law provides applications like substantive/procedural due process for teacher discharge/decertification on the grounds of incompetence/unfitness—with unfitness including gross immorality/moral turpitude. The legal doublets I ask graduate students to know for a final exam provide them with a good study guide. These are also an effective way to make sense out of what appear to be confusing laws and cases affecting educational decisions leaders must make to keep them out of courts and in their schools.

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Dr. Thomas McDaniel
Over the past two years, numerous regional presentations have been held in support of the professional development needs for school librarians/media specialists. These sessions were cooperatively sponsored by the OSL and facilitated by Ms. Regina Thurmond and through a Library of Congress Grant awarded to the University of South Carolina’s Graduate School of Education. This grant is managed by Dr. Karen Gavigan, Associate Professor, School of Library and Information Science and Dr. Gavigan was the lead in this venture which had additional support from the South Carolina Association of School Librarians. The series was also financially supported by the Follett Publishing Company which provided lunches and other site support. Over the past two years at least seven hundred school librarians/media specialist attended the sessions.

As a former principal and participant in the SLO implementation process for the state, I was asked to develop a segment as part of the panoply of diverse offerings focusing on the function of the school librarian/media specialist support for teachers writing SLOs.

As part of the SLO presentation, attendees were asked about their participation in the SLO process at their schools, thus far. The feedback was astounding! Often times there were more than a hundred school librarians/media specialists in attendance and at no time did the number of participants ever approach double digits. Indeed, the paucity of school librarians who had any involvement in the SLO process caused me to ponder why such a valuable resource was being squandered, given the academic resources required to ensure SLO success. The more I probed, the greater my consternation became because some in attendance even stated they were dissuaded from having any involvement in the development or support of the SLO process by school administrators.

During these interchanges, I informed the audiences that many teachers cited differentiated instruction and flexible grouping as two salient strategies for implementing SLOs in a heterogeneous teaching environment. It was further noted that documenting instructional strategies is a key element within the SLO review and approval process by the school’s principal. This stands to reason when one
considers the scope of SLOs in South Carolina for it is estimated that 98% of all students in the state will be included in the SLO process. It was also stressed that SLOs are designed to measure student academic growth, not proficiency. This means that even students in the top 10% have growth targets which must be addressed within the overall SLO process. Consequently, varying levels of rigor must be considered when constructing a comprehensive SLO for an instructional group of six or more.

As a result, it stands to reason that classroom teachers are going to need a host of materials and resources if they are going to meet the diverse academic needs of all students under their charge. It was therefore sagacious to opine, “Where are these resources mostly likely to be found?” The chorus that was most often heard was, “In the library/media complex!” Yet, the level of involvement between the classroom teachers and the school librarians/media specialists was literally non-existent. Truly a conundrum which must be addressed!

The lack of school librarian/media specialist collaboration within the SLO process is further exacerbated when one considers that the SLO process, besides an initial approval conference prior to the start of the SLO, also includes a mid-year review conference. In this session, the student academic growth objectives are reviewed and the teacher, with the SLO evaluator, determines if any adjustments need to be made. It is a diagnostic determination which may result in a number of findings. Some students may need additional interventions to reach their growth objectives, some students may be ahead of the projected goal and require more rigorous resources and finally some students may need to have their objectives down-graded based on significant information agreed upon by both educators. There is also a final conference, at the end of the instructional interval, when teachers report out their level of success in meeting all of their students learning objectives. Imagine how a school librarian/media specialist could help here as well. Teachers, as they exit school for the summer and begin preparation for the coming year, will have a cogent understanding of their instructional needs in order to be more responsive to students in the coming year.

Once again, this is an opportunity for the school librarians/media specialists to be part of the resolution process as they offer the most strategic options for teacher/student support. Yet, as with the approval process, school librarians/media specialists, in most instances, are absent or excluded from participating. Again, this has been the operational norm for the past two years and, if thinking doesn’t change, will be the modality for 2017-2018. It is a tragic waste of personnel, academic resources and burdens the classroom teacher with extended time in preparing responsive lessons based on student needs. The last item has morale implications, as well.

For the past two years, SLOs, by SCDOE directives, have been “presumed proficient.” The same will be the expectation for the next school year (2017-2018). This has been done to establish a comfort level with a process that is essentially new to most South Carolina teachers and administrators and requires a new paradigm on how instruction and accountability will be assessed.

In 2018-2019, the SLOs will be part of a merge in an overall teacher proficiency process that has the teacher’s classroom performance determined by the new South Carolina Teaching Standards 4.0 (Expanded ADEPT). This year, It Will Count! Currently, all administrators in South Carolina are receiving training on the 4.0 rubric and will have 2017-2018 to orient all teachers on the items and levels within the instrument. This means almost all teachers in South Carolina will be dependent on SLO’s to measure how effective they are in the classroom. Their strategies and resources will be a key element within this process.

With this realization as a backdrop, there remains but one year to enlist and marshal the resources and talents of the school librarians/media specialists. Teachers need their help and school administrators have to ensure that they are asked to the table as the final “comfort” year begins. In many instances, I liken it to hungry people passing by a free buffet. What do you think?

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Mr. Driscoll is an Education Associate with the SC Department of Education in the Office of School Leadership. The coordinator the School Leaders Executive Institute and the Institute for District Administrators and mentor twenty-five first-year principals. He came into education forty-five years ago via the U.S. Marines after dropping out of high school and a tour in Viet Nam. He has been a teacher, asst. principal, principal, and associate superintendent during his professional life.
In Aiken County Public Schools, we have a motto—

*All Means All.*

Educators often hear (and repeat) phrases such as “all students can learn” or “all students can be successful” throughout conversations on education. Here, however, the “ALL” in these phrases truly means ALL—no exceptions and no excuses. Ensuring that all Aiken County students are College and Career Ready is a primary focus for us, especially with the knowledge that our students are competing for opportunities in a constantly evolving global society. In order to provide students with the tools necessary to compete and win in the global economy, we have increased the capacity of our educators and created new avenues for students to access more rigorous coursework. We have an obligation to all Aiken County students to provide them with opportunities that deliberately eliminate challenges to their post-secondary goals. Access to more rigorous coursework is a vital component in our District’s mission to cultivate future-ready students today! No student should graduate from an Aiken County Public School questioning their College and career preparedness or ruining missed opportunities due to a lack of challenging and stimulating courses.

Meeting and exceeding our mission mandate as a school district and securing the future of our students at South Aiken High School both provide us with an example of the shift in belief that is occurring right now in Aiken County. This shift not only includes access to rigorous coursework, but the promotion of high expectations for all students. The shift in belief on our campus alone has been palpable, focused through the implementation and execution of two culturally significant initiatives.

We have collaborated with the National Math + Science Initiative in an effort to systematically increase the number of students enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, with the goal of having all South Aiken High students experience at least one AP course. Students in Advanced Placement courses take a comprehensive final exam with a goal of earning a qualifying score, which may exempt them from a college course, or provide college credit. Increasing the number of students engaged in this more rigorous coursework is significant, as the courses give students access to a collegiate equivalent framework, increase the probability of college acceptance, and either decrease the cost of higher education for parents or lower the amount of student debt incurred by students. Advanced Placement exam scores range from 1 to 5, with a qualifying score being a 3 or higher. However, research has shown that students who score a 2 on Advanced Placement exams achieve college grade point averages comparable to those students who scored a 3, 4, or 5 on AP exams. Even if a student does not receive a qualifying score, their exposure to a collegiate framework now will better prepare them for college. Limiting student enrollment in AP courses to those perceived as capable of achieving a qualifying score, their exposure to a collegiate framework now will better prepare them for college. Limiting student enrollment in AP courses to those perceived as capable of achieving a qualifying score does not align with our District mission, and is detrimental to a great number of students. A major factor for college admissions staff in their decision making process
are the types of courses a student elects to take. Although this fact is generally misunderstood, the types of courses a student experiences is considerably more important than a student’s grade point average and class rank. The strength of a school’s curriculum is also a prime consideration. Advanced Placement courses are recognized and accepted worldwide, with students from over a 100 countries engaging in the same course work and comprehensive exams. With a single globally recognized course on their transcript an Aiken County student can immediately meet two of the most important factors of college admission. Admissions professionals receiving applications from South Aiken High students recognize our AP courses and have an accurate measure of what our students are capable of in a college classroom. Finally, in a world where college costs are steadily increasing, our AP courses give families the power to lower the cost of the college experience before their student ever arrives on a college campus.

We have also enrolled all ninth-grade students in Honors Biology. This initiative places us in further alignment with our overall mission, and readily displays the shift in cultural belief by ensuring that we provide access to rigorous coursework and practice for all students. In a single step, we are advocating for our students while also raising our expectations for them. Raising expectations inside our building is key, as we often meet students who have no one outside of our school to advocate for them and encourage them to attempt more strenuous course work. For this reason, they drift aimlessly through the educational system only doing what is required and are not pushed to stretch themselves academically or intellectually. At South Aiken High School, we are challenging our students, but we are also providing them with the support they need to succeed accompanied by the belief that they can meet and exceed any challenge. Honors Biology requires students to practice literacy and hone their reading skills in order to be successful, and our teachers have themselves embraced the challenge by creating literacy rich environments that empower the struggling reader while also engaging the advanced student. As a prerequisite lab science course, Biology is critical to college application requirements. Enrolling ninth-grade students in Honors Biology removes yet another barrier to post-secondary success as our students have the opportunity to place three lab sciences on their transcript following their junior year, improving again the possibility of college admission. Success in Honors Biology also bolsters student confidence, which can lead to a new Honors course enrollment. When we teach and support high expectations our students rise to meet them, as evidenced by an 81.3% End of Course Examination Program passage rate and 92.5% course passage rate for our freshman Honors Biology students during the 2016-17 school year. We know some students will perform better in the course than others, but the experience and confidence gained from a student knowing they have taken an Honors course expands that student’s horizon and opens their mind to a new world of academic and intellectual possibility.

Increasing and encouraging access to Advanced Placement and Honors courses at South Aiken High School for all students is a perfect example of our belief that All Means All. The experience our students gain with access to rigorous courses and the culture of high expectations we model gives our students the best possible chance to succeed by removing limitations to post-secondary goals. Some may ask – “but what if they can’t?” I counter that skepticism with a question. What if they can? We believe all students deserve access to more rigorous course work and we put that belief into practice every day. Shifting our belief has altered our cultural trajectory, thereby fostering an ever-increasing positive learning environment where students are encouraged to push beyond their perceived limitations and rise above a future of what might have been.

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Mr. Fuller is in his third year as an assistant principal where he is the freshman academy coordinator and Advanced Placement advisor.
As a first year teacher, my school rolled out Chromebooks and became a 1:1 school; each student had their own laptop device. So, in a way, I learned with the students on how to use and implement technology into the classroom. I started out as most teachers do, using the Chromebooks to substitute tasks such as note-taking, creating posters on Google docs rather than on paper, and the like. Over time, I realized the potential that technology could bring to the classroom, and what my students were missing out on. Technology should not be a substitute for class work, it should be transformative. It can improve test scores, give students real-world experiences, and prepare them for college and beyond.

In 2000, Riley, Holleman, and Roberts conducted a study and concluded that “schools employing effective technology integration had shown positive results for both teachers and students. They reported that teachers were better able to assist students in comprehending difficult concepts and better able to individualize instruction for student’s needs.” (Maninger 37) Effective technology integration goes beyond modifying classwork assignments from being paper/pencil worksheets to Google documents, drawings or presentations. Effective technology integration happens when teachers significantly redesign their assignments and create products that are authentic in nature. So, how do teachers do this, exactly?

In my classroom, I do not simply trade out note-taking with Google docs, but instead use an online site called Pear Deck to make note-taking more interactive for my students. This site allows me to ask questions during my lecture and all of the students can answer at once (anonymously) through their devices. Students are connected to their notes online and as a teacher, I am able to gather deep insight from my students - what do they understand? What are they struggling with? Do I need to back up and re-explain certain concepts? Before using this tool, I would have never been able to hear from every student every time I asked a question during lectures. I would have never been able to formatively assess them between each slide in my presentation.

Technology has allowed me to do other things with my students that wouldn’t have been possible before. It provides me with ways to challenge my students and provide tasks for them that empower them. Discovery Education offers many exciting opportunities for students to take virtual field trips. My students have visited the Alcoa Power and Propulsion company in Whitehall, Michigan, and have climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa. Teachers could have their students plan their own virtual field trip, too! In Sandra Schurr’s book, Authentic Assessment: Active, Engaging Product and Performance Measures, she discusses many examples of authentic assessments and strategies to use in the classroom. One example is to have students become a tour guide and lead their own virtual field trip. They would research online tours that connected with their topic of interest and then teach it to the class.

Another way technology has allowed for a transformative classroom environment is through collaborating with students from other schools. My students have been able connect face-to-face with other classrooms in different schools via Google Hangouts. My students are currently working with high school students in our district on a PBL they are working on.
The high school students are members of a STEAM magnet program and have been challenged to create toys, games, or apps that promote STEM/STEAM subjects to young girls. My younger cohort of students will work with in them order to gather information, vet prototypes, and offer feedback as they build. This type of collaboration has offered my students a way to develop lifelong learning skills that fit the profile of the South Carolina graduate (figure 1). At the end of their project, the goal is to have products that the students can actually market and sell to a real audience.

Students growing up in our digital age have an advantage from those in the past; they can use technology in ways that allow them to learn the skills necessary to become productive members of our society. Many educators are aware that technology can be a remarkable tool inside the classroom, but need a technology toolbox; specific examples of how to use it in a way that reshapes student’s learning. There are many uses of technology that break through simple substitution of tasks such as typing notes during lectures rather than writing them down. These types of technology integration have no real purposeful advancement, but simply doing what we've always done in the classroom. Technology can be so much more than that. It can allow students to do things within the four walls of the classroom that could never be done in previous years. We can invite our students to learn in ways that are transformative, invoke critical thinking skills, creativity, and innovation.

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Trial by Fire: Helping Assistant School Leaders be Prepared for the Inferno

Dr. Amy Ballard

The year was 2008. I was 27 years old and just a few months out of the classroom in my first role as an assistant principal. My principal was out of town for a conference, leaving me as the only administrator in the building. After lunch, a student asked to speak to me. “Sure,” I said, blissfully unaware of the trial by fire I was about to experience in my brand-new career in administration. He told me about a 6th grade student who had a gun on campus. I found a gun in the student’s locker, put the school on lockdown, and retrieved the student from class. The rest of the day was a blur of police, questioning students, visits from the district office, and calls to and from parents. The days following were met with scared and angry parents, news media, and expulsion proceedings.

Why do I share this story? As a young, inexperienced administrator I am not sure that I was fully prepared for the events of that day, especially to handle them alone. The inferno I experienced that day and the subsequent decade of administrative experience has led me to question if we do enough to prepare assistant school leaders. We often talk about building and preparing school leaders, but it is imperative that we not leave our assistant school leaders out of the conversation. In my work as an adjunct professor, I was tasked with preparing the next generation of school leaders. Principal preparation and certification is just that – principal preparation and certification. We rarely discuss the differences between the role of the principal and the role of the assistant principal. We need to do more to prepare leaders to take on the role of assistant principal by supporting them in the transition to administration from the classroom, helping them understand the job itself, and assisting them in adjusting to their role in the hierarchy.

Making the transition

The transition from classroom teacher to administrator is not an easy one. Most of us became educators because we love children. Our undergraduate degrees included classes on child or adolescent psychology, and our methods courses taught us the best pedagogical approaches to use when teaching those ages. Additionally, our classroom management courses taught us about using both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation with our students. As an administrator, however, you spend a large portion of your time interacting with adults. Yet few administration programs have courses on andragogy (adult learning theory), motivation of adults, or adult psychology.

New school leaders go from being in control of most of their school day in the classroom to responding to the needs of others and no longer controlling their own time. The isolation that new school leaders feel is often a brand new experience for those who had numerous collegial relationships in the classroom. Sigford (2005) discusses how
this transition to administration follows the stages of grief including denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and finally, acceptance. She asserts,

We never learn about the emotional stage of change in graduate school. Professors tend to ignore discussing the socio-emotional parts of the job because such discussions feel ‘soft.’ By the very nature of schools, we as administrators do not talk about such things with our peers because we are so isolated. We have little opportunity to be reflective as we deal with the daily task of survival. It is through the recognition and acceptance of the work of these stages [of grief], however, that helps administrators achieve successful socialization in their roles as administrators. (p. 14)

This year I have had the opportunity to coach a first year assistant principal. After she mentioned the discrepancy between her prior expectations of the job and her current reality, I asked her to journal her thoughts. She wrote, “So the reality is what it is, and my challenge in my new role is coming to terms with my new reality and trying to find happiness there.” The coaching conversations we have had have enabled her to move through the stages of grief while reflecting on her own thinking and learning. CEOs have coaches, teachers now have coaches, but school leaders typically do not have coaches. In his 2011 New Yorker article, Atul Gawande, a surgeon, discusses his own experience with a coach as well as the experiences of professional singers, athletes, and teachers. He states that we pay for athletic coaches because we care about the results of the sports teams. He further asserts that if we care half as much about results in schools, we will hire coaches there as well.

Principal preparation programs should include a course or, at a minimum, a conversation about the role of the assistant administrator. We should prepare students for what will likely be their first step on the administrative career ladder. We need to help them understand the typical job functions, especially those in contrast to what principals typically do.

The job itself

Understanding the job itself is another area in which new and aspiring assistant school leaders need support. On several occasions, especially early in my career, I told others that I really didn’t need a degree in administration. What I actually needed was a degree in criminal justice with a concentration in detective skills. As an assistant principal, much of the day can be spent investigating discipline incidents, yet I have never seen a course, article, or even presentation on how to do that effectively.

In my course on school leadership, we spent an entire evening discussing the differences between leaders and managers as described by Zaleznik (1992) and Kotter (2001). The students (all aspiring administrators) came to the realization that many of their assistant school leaders were managers while their building principals were leaders. The two jobs do often require a very different skill set. I often share my perception, gained over years of experience, that assistant principals are the “do-er’s” while principals are the “be-er’s.” While the spelling of this last “word” often makes them laugh, they do understand what I mean. Assistant school leaders are required to “do” a lot: organize testing, create duty schedules, draft student handbooks, generate bell schedules, etc. It can often feel like mundane work, but it is imperative for the smooth operation of the school. On the other hand, principals are required to “be” a lot: presence in the cafeteria, attendance at sporting events, visibility at dismissal, etc. Understanding the dichotomy between the roles, and their particular job within that, is something we must help assistant school leaders do.

Principal preparation programs should include a course or, at a minimum, a conversation about the role of the assistant administrator. We should prepare students for what will likely be their first step on the administrative career ladder. We need to help them understand the typical job functions, especially those in contrast to what principals typically do.
Being the assistant

Perhaps my favorite quote on assistant school leadership is from John Daresh (2004). He writes, “Being an assistant principal is often a real test of a person’s ability to demonstrate humility. You have not been hired to be a ‘coprincipal’ or ‘senior advisor.’ You are an assistant to the person in charge” (p. 53). We become administrators because we want to make a greater difference for both students and teachers. Most of the time, however, assistant principals will be implementing someone else’s vision. While a good principal will ask for opinions and feedback, not all will. Assistant school leaders need to be prepared for that. They need to use the opportunity to learn about their next role—that of the school principal. They need to pay attention to what they like and don’t like, make notes of what to do and not do, and continue learning each and every day.

I just had a conversation with a principal the other day who told me she didn’t hire me years ago because she didn’t need another person just like herself. What she needed was someone who could balance her and who had strengths where she had weaknesses. Assistant administrators are often hired to compensate for the weaknesses of the principal. Many principals will be reflective and verbalize the need for their assistant to balance them. If not, assistant school leaders need to discern those weaknesses and compensate for them when possible.

Knowing how to do this, or even knowing to do it at all, is part of the problem. A solution is providing mentors for first- and second-year assistant administrators. New teachers have mentors that help them unravel the daily to-do’s, adjust to life in the classroom, and answer their many questions. We should provide the same for assistant school leaders.

I jokingly titled this article Trial by Fire with a subtitle about the inferno to catch your attention, but for some first-year assistant principals it can really feel like that. As Daresh (2004) states, “assistant principal might be one of the more difficult educational jobs that a person can do” (p. 5). My hope is that you understand (or remember) the difficulties facing new administrators and that we can put supports in place through coaches, coursework, and mentors to help them thrive in their new setting.

References

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One thing we know to be true is that the principalship is a lonely place. The reality of the principalship often stands in stark contrast with the visions we have as aspiring leaders working to become principals. Both of us have had many experiences in education and serving as principals allowed us to contribute to positive change and outcomes for the students, teachers, families and communities we served. We wouldn’t trade these experiences for anything. However, we also realized how demanding the job of a principal is in today’s educational climate. We often talked about how we can create conditions that will support leaders in their work.

The Fallacy of the Superhero Principal

The principalship has drastically changed over the years. There are so many variables to successful schools and it seems principals are expected to control them all. Principals are often viewed as superheroes who must somehow find a way to get it all done with limited resources and seemingly insurmountable challenges. We think this is dangerous. It is not realistic to think one principal (or even both principals in our former co-principal model) can do it all. We must abandon the idea of the superhero principal swooping in to save the day. It’s just not practical, realistic or sustainable.

So, what can we do to change this? What can we do to make the conditions of the principalship more conducive to the work we know we can do?

As educational leaders we know how powerful collaboration is for our teachers. We build our master schedules around collaboration time for our teachers. We work hard to ensure our teachers are given the tools needed to collaborate on the right things. We spend many hours supporting our teachers because we know how teacher collaboration is one of the keys to success. However, it is important to stop and ask if we are collaborating ourselves. What are we doing to collaborate with other educational leaders? If you can’t find a good answer to this we implore you to work on developing your PLN so you can collaborate like you expect your teachers to collaborate. Reach out to other principals in your district and try to solve problems together. We implore our teachers to avoid operating as silos - let’s make sure we are modeling this as well. If you have a social media presence you are probably engaged with many other school leaders. This is great! Leveraging the experience of other leaders and sharing ideas and resources is not only smart, it is critical for your long term success.

We also learned as principals that one person can’t do it alone. In fact, one team of administrators in a school can’t do it alone. The demands and expectations of running a school make it inherently impossible to be the only leader or leaders in a building. It is fools gold to think you know everything and can make all the best decisions. We often wonder why we have this perception that a leader is a superhero. That may play out nicely in the movies, but in reality we feel we are setting leaders up for failure when we expect them to be everything - especially in the most high needs schools. Thus, we feel it is imperative to develop teacher leaders that are already in your building. Here is the thing - one of the secrets to success is already in your building - teacher leaders!
Teacher Leadership and Why It Matters

You might ask well how can I find the time to develop teacher leaders when I have so much else going on? We would ask, how do you have time to not develop these leaders? We served as co-principals in a chronically underperforming school in North Carolina. In fact, it was on the state’s “Low Performing” school list since the list was started. We quickly learned that there were so many more needs than we could tackle alone - and that is with two experienced principals with successful records of increasing student achievement in South Carolina. We quickly learned that if we failed to identify and develop teacher leaders we would fail due mostly to the sheer number of challenges we faced.

Identifying teacher leaders is both difficult and not always an exact science. The first step is building solid relationships with the teachers you serve. If you fail to get to know a teacher and really hone in on their strengths and potential you will never be able to identifying the teacher leaders. It is imperative to truly know your staff - and that can be difficult. Look for the teachers who consistently go above and beyond and have a true passion for what they do and for the kids they serve.

It is critical that a principal be able to distinguish between teachers with leadership potential and those who think they are leaders but in reality possess very little in terms of leadership qualities. Sometimes the teachers who are the loudest and/or complain the most might be viewed as leaders. If a teacher complains for the sake of complaining or passive-aggressively stirs the proverbial pot, we contend they are not leaders - at least not the leaders you want to develop. Look for the teachers who are passionate about doing the right things for kids. Look for the teachers who collaborate with other adults. Look for the teachers who truly lead their students. Look for teachers who are truly successful teachers. These are the types of teachers we feel you should spend time on developing as leaders.

Once you identify your potential leaders make sure you provide ample opportunities for the to develop their leadership skills. There are many ways to do this. It can be naming them department heads - even if they are not the popular choice. It could be tapping them to run an after school or tutoring program. It could be giving them the responsibility of researching a program and reporting back to the faculty. It could be using them as exemplars. There are many ways to show these potential leaders that you believe in them and see them as leaders. Some will love this and some will want to shy away. However, the important thing to remember is when you see potential it is up to you to begin changing this potential into reality.

Impact of Accountability on Building School Leaders

The increased focus on accountability over the last decade has certainly impacted school leadership. From the preparation of school leaders, to the job functions and responsibilities of school leaders, accountability adds a different and more complex layer to the work of school leaders. For every student who is served in a public school today, the expectations for achievement is made clear by both federal and state policies, as well as expectations of one’s own local school district’s strategic and school renewal plans. This added responsibility greatly impacts the leader’s behavior and priorities. At the center of the school leader’s job is effective teaching and learning. Long gone are the days of facility management, organization of school events, and serving simply as the face of the school. While those things still matter, they are secondary to effective teaching and learning and accountability for such.

Today’s school leaders must be instructional leaders. That is, they must possess a solid understanding of instructional pedagogy and methodology, and moreover, today’s school leaders must possess the ability to coach educators in a way that improves their instructional practice. Evaluation of one’s practice is necessary for school leaders, but to change academic outcomes for students on accountability measures, school leaders must be able to effectively coach teachers and provide quality, robust, and specific feedback to them that grows them as professionals, and in turn, makes them more effective in impacting student achievement.

So often this focus on accountability can lead to school leaders who carry a great deal of personal and professional stress. School leaders need assistance in knowing how to manage stress, how to create opportunities for collaboration to solve common problems of practice with their peers, and how to provide feedback and coaching for teachers that results in improved instructional practice. School leaders need opportunities to refine and enhance their pedagogical and methodological knowledge. School leaders need the freedom and permission to innovate to solve problems and improve learning for students and the support of both external and internal stakeholders in doing so. School leaders must set the example as lead learners, ensuring that they’ve adequately learned what it is they are responsible for leading and understand how to leverage the strengths of those around them to collaborate for the improvement of learning for all students. Superintendents can help school leaders navigate this new wave of school leadership by building their understanding of what it takes to be an effective school leader in today’s educational landscape.
What Superintendents Can Do To Build Strong School Leaders

Listen. Superintendents must take the time and interest to listen to the concerns and challenges of school level leaders. In listening to their problems, it is important for district level leaders to note the variety of factors school leaders face: feelings of isolation, increased responsibility for accountability, the need to identify and determine teacher leaders and leverage the strengths of staff to improve student learning. If superintendents will take the time to listen, their insight regarding the role and work of school leaders might better inform their ability to choose school level leaders who have a greater potential for success.

Support. Superintendents must support school leaders by providing clarity regarding expectations, focus, and identifying clear strategies to help school leaders meet both school level and district level goals. Superintendents should practice differentiation in their support of schools and school leaders. Supporting school leaders should look no different than the support of teachers or students. The emphasis on differentiation does not end at the student level. We contend that superintendents of districts with multiple school sites, some that may be low performing, ought to think about and provide a differentiated support cycle for those schools that are low performing. That can be done in a variety of ways. For example, our superintendent in the Rowan-Salisbury School System, Dr. Lynn Moody, did it by creating a co-principalship model to combat chronic low performance, extensive teacher turnover rates, and improve academic outcomes. Perhaps superintendents should push themselves to think about how school leadership can look and operate differently than the traditional leadership model based on the needs of the school. Providing differentiated support can make all the difference in helping school leaders have a successful tenure.

Allow for Collaboration & Innovation
School leaders need the opportunity to collaborate with like-minded peers who are trying to solve similar problems of practice. With all the research centered on teacher collaboration it’s interesting that providing principals or school level leaders with the opportunity to collaborate isn’t a common practice. Principal collaboration must move beyond the meeting after the meeting in the parking lots of district offices, over dinner or lunch while attending a conference, or over a phone call after a long day of working with students, teachers, and parents. We contend that like teachers, principals need job embedded opportunities to collaborate with other school leaders.

Finally, school leaders need the support to innovate, to take calculated risks with well thought out plans, in order to improve the learning outcomes of students. With the right kind of support from one’s superintendent, principals can work to improve achievement using a variety of methods while remaining accountable for the results, but with the innovation that is necessary to meet the learning needs of every student.

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In many parts of the United States, that’s what students, parents and school leaders keep asking about: the teacher shortage and what can be done to finally end it. While teacher shortages are not new, they are getting much worse. A report by the nonprofit Learning Policy Institute found that teacher education enrollment dropped from 691,000 to 451,000, a 35 percent reduction, between 2009 and 2014.

In 2016 more than 6,000 public school teachers in South Carolina didn't return to their classroom for the new school year, while the number of our state’s college students earning an education degree shrank to fewer than 1,900. And those numbers will worsen. A survey of last spring’s graduating high school seniors showed just 5 percent had any interest in becoming a teacher.

"It’s pretty clear we’ve got a significant issue," said Jane Turner, director of the South Carolina’s Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement.

Even with alternative certification programs such as PACE and Teach for America, too many classes are dropped from student schedules because the school cannot find a teacher and more than 100,000 classrooms are being staffed this year by instructors who are not certified in that subject area. Not only are many of these uncertified teachers less effective on average, they are also 2 to 3 times more likely to leave teaching than certified teachers, creating a revolving door that makes solving shortages a never-ending struggle.

While recruitment problems and teacher shortages occur disproportionately in low-income, high-minority schools, in key subjects, every kind of district is being hit. Our recent review of state teacher workforce reports found that current data on the 2017-18 school year confirm that most states are experiencing significant difficulty hiring qualified teachers in multiple fields. The U. S. Department of Education reports that a majority of states identify shortages of teachers in mathematics (47 states and the District of Columbia), special education (46 states and D.C.), science (43 states), world languages (40 states and D.C.), career and technical education (32 states), teachers of English learners (32 states), art, music, and dance (28 states), and English (27 states).

Let’s look at teacher shortages in South Carolina over the past fifteen years. In the 2001-2002 school year the State Department of Education reported teacher shortages in four areas: Early Childhood, Special Education, English/Languages Arts Elementary and Spanish.

For the current school year, statewide teacher shortages were reported for: Agriculture, Art, Business Education, Career and Technology, Dance, Engineering, English for Speakers of Other Languages, Family/Consumer Science, Gifted and Talented, Health Literacy, Media Specialist, Middle Level Language Arts, Middle Level Mathematics, Middle Level Science, Middle Level Social Studies, Middle Level Music, Secondary Level English/Language Arts, Secondary Level Mathematics, Secondary Level Science, Special Education, Speech Language, Theatre, World Language.
What can we do as school leaders to turn this trend around?

The first step is to admit that we have a problem. Admit that we need to do something dramatically different when it comes to recruiting teachers. It does feel like we have drifted off course. The steering on the recruitment bus is wobbly and the brakes seem worn.

We have surveyed school districts across the country, asking them to describe how they recruit new teachers. Their responses indicate that many school systems have not kept pace with the recruitment process and best practices of other fields. Our analysis highlights challenges within the current landscape of teacher recruitment in school districts across the country:

- School districts’ recruitment strategies are hyperlocal, untargeted, or nonexistent.
- School districts do not seem to understand that they are competing with other school districts and with companies that have more sophisticated human capital systems and offer more competitive salaries.
- School districts’ application and selection processes often emphasize static application materials—such as written applications, resumes, and proof of certifications—over performance-based measures.
- School systems do not have a clearly defined value proposition that convincingly lays out the reasons—beyond money benefits—why teaching in their district is attractive. Can your recruitment team lay out twenty-five reasons why a person would enjoy living and working in your community?

Based on our analysis, we offer the following recommendations for school districts to improve their approach to recruiting excellent teachers:

- School districts should devote more time and resources to intentional recruitment.
- School districts should include performance measures in their application and selection processes.
- School districts should be able to demonstrate to new teachers how they will be provided opportunities to build their skills and gradually assume increased responsibility.
- School districts should consider using teacher residency programs that provide apprenticeships in high-need districts under the wing of expert teachers. Recruited teachers who complete their training, would be hired and paid for their training time with years of service.
- School districts should initiate “grow-your-own” programs enabling young people and paraprofessionals to get prepared and come back and teach in the communities they have lived in.
- School districts should initiate high-quality mentoring for new teachers that helps them survive and succeed in their early years on the job. Given that 20 to 30% of all new teachers nationwide leave the field entirely within the first five years of their career, schools need to be better prepared with staff on-boarding and induction programs. The current mentorship programs leave too much to chance and are dependent on the quality of the mentor. Those who mentor simply to receive an additional stipend may not be fully invested in the success of their newly recruited teacher. About 90 percent of the annual nationwide demand for teachers is created because teachers leave the profession early. Two-thirds of those teacher leave for reasons other than retirement, including student behavior, lack of adequate preparation and mentoring, pressures of test-based accountability, lack of administrative supports, low salaries, and poor teaching conditions.
- The legislature must stop changing the standards of success on a yearly basis. The legislative mandates that keep popping up are confusing, constantly changing and hit new and overwhelmed teachers the hardest.
References
The Nationwide Teacher Shortage Area (TSA) list, showing the nation’s teacher shortage areas by State, is available on the U.S. Department of Education’s Web site at the following location: http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/pol/tnsa.doc

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Having built dynamic teams for the leaders in the IT world, she now uses that expertise to help K-12 schools hire the educators that they need to succeed. Ms. Gordon has worked with Amazon, recruiting IT professionals and building Amazon’s data warehousing system and logistic teams. She is the founder of E Square and works internationally designing, implementing and monitoring recruitment and retention systems for business and education.

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Saluda Middle School:

Saluda Middle School partnered with the University of South Carolina’s Educational Leadership and Policies Anne Frank traveling exhibit to train twelve student leaders to guide and conduct holocaust education to the rest of the school and the community. Pictured is Joceyln a bilingual guide at Saluda Middle School.

Submitted by Dr. Suzy Hardie.

Spartanburg 3 - Broome HS:

District Superintendent, Kenny Blackwood, joins the cheerleaders from Broome High School in Spartanburg School District 3 at “Pink Out Night” to recognize cancer survivors. There was also a moment of silence to remember those loved ones who lost their fight.

Photograph taken by: Kathy Ann Johnston.

Spartanburg 3 – Clifdale Elementary:

Principal of Clifdale Elementary School and SCASA member, Windy Hodge (left), and Director of Food Services, Audra Terry (right), join hands as they cross the finish line at the Community Wellness Color Run. Students and their families came together with local partners to educate and engage in lifestyle choices that will cultivate a legacy of wellness.

Photograph taken by: Kathy Ann Johnston
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