

When Intervention Is Necessary



I'm preaching to the choir when I write that education today is a complicated and challenging field, where demands and expectations keep growing and the job of principal is all about managing for results.

It's no longer good enough just to stay up to speed on academic standards, testing and accountability, instructional leadership, data analysis, professional development, or community relations. You have to know how and when to put that knowledge to work.

Successful principals are skillful at taking decisive action when faced with such important and difficult challenges as providing for students in special education, finding new ways to reach those separated by language barriers, or dealing with disruptive students. As the school leader, you have to determine when intervention is necessary and which would be the most effective approach.

Planning Ahead

Good principals also have a knack for being ahead of the curve in spotting problems, making plans to address them, and ensuring the cooperation of staffs and parents. For example, they may develop a plan for dealing with bullying before the issue boils over into a crisis.

It is when they focus on areas where delivering a proficient education is most challenging that principals should be at the forefront in getting wide input and acceptance for the most promising intervention strategies. Whether the issue is behavior, how children with disabilities will be served, or developing a plan for closing racial, socioeconomic, or gender achievement gaps, principals need to help the public understand the issue and the school's approach in dealing with it.

As leaders, you have to develop a strong sense of the particular issues percolating in your buildings, districts or communities, and take action at the right time and in the right way to address them and get the desired results. Too often, we've seen the devastating effects of letting tough issues go unchecked.

Creating Effective Solutions

As an example of this proactive approach, NAESP recently entered a partnership with the National Center for Missing

and Exploited Children to help address the national problem of children abducted by family members—about 57,000 a year, according to U.S. Department of Justice estimates. More than a third are school-age children, who often find themselves trapped in difficult and frightening situations. Working together, we've developed model legislation for states that would require schools to flag the records of abducted students. Should someone request that those records

be transferred to another school, as often happens, law enforcement can be contacted.

While 27 states now have some requirement for flagging the records of missing children, those laws are often unwieldy or not enforced. We believe our partnership has created a very focused system that will help many children.

Working through this issue offered us an opportunity to raise the same kinds of questions many schools face in confronting complicated and hard-to-fix challenges:

- How do we work through issues that get us off-task?
- How do we create the logical steps to get results?
- How do we create solutions that give those involved necessary and doable roles?

Meeting the Challenge

We need to be in the habit of asking these kinds of questions and finding answers if we are to develop the instincts to see and plan for the many challenges that keep coming our way. Leaving tough issues to chance, or responding only after situations spin out of control, is not what real leaders do. By honing effective intervention skills, we build our capacity to face these issues and to meet the challenge of the accountability system created by the No Child Left Behind Act.

We don't want to see our schools singled out as places where students in ESL programs or children with special needs fail to meet annual progress goals for lack of effective improvement strategies.

This won't happen if you identify challenges early and take appropriate measures to address them. Success comes to those who plan for it. ■

“We don't want to see our schools singled out as places where...children with special needs fail to meet annual progress goals for lack of effective improvement strategies.”

What is essential in your classroom?

Accomplishment



HeatSeal® Ultima 65® Laminator—high quality and easy to use in the office or classroom

You provide the opportunities, we'll supply the essentials

Recognize their accomplishments in a lasting way—with a little help from us. At School Specialty® Education Essentials™, we serve only educators. So we know how important it is to be a convenient and complete resource for schools—giving you time to focus on what's essential.



**Over 22,000 products
for schools like yours**

Find the most comprehensive selection of school furniture, curriculum materials, arts and crafts, teacher resources and other innovative products from such leaders as GBC®.



 School Specialty
Education Essentials™

For your FREE catalog, call 1-888-388-3224
or visit www.educationessentials.com

“If students work really hard and if they achieve something that they really want, like Student of the Month, it will make them push harder to get it again.”

–Jessica

Student, Champlin Park High School–Champlin, MN



©2005 Target Stores. The Bullseye Design and Target are registered trademarks of Target Brands, Inc. All rights reserved.

Giving praise is as important as giving grades at Champlin Park High School. When Jessica won recognition as Spanish Student of the Month, her motivation soared. “It made me excited about working hard, as if all that hard work paid off,” she said. With the help of Take Charge of Education® funds from Target, Champlin Park is able to honor Jessica and other students for their achievements and inspire them to achieve even more.

[Target.com/communitygiving](https://www.target.com/communitygiving)

Giving over \$2 million every week.
Making a real difference every day.

