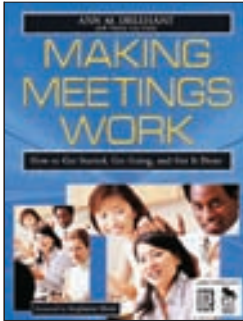


Conducting Effective Meetings

Making Meetings Work: How to Get Started, Get Going, and Get It Done.

Ann M. Delehant, with Valerie von Frank. Corwin Press, 2007, 181 pages. Available at www.corwinpress.com.

If you're like me, you're always looking for ways to make your meetings more effective and meaningful. *Making Meetings Work* delivers just what the title promises; it is a comprehensive guide to planning and delivering meetings, and evaluating their effectiveness. The book showcases the power of collaborative meeting structures and is built around the premise that "more and more, group work is becoming a part of educators' work." The meeting model of the lone presenter dispensing information no longer serves the challenges and opportunities facing schools today.



The author's careful explanations of step-by-step processes involved in planning for meetings, getting a group started, running the meeting, making decisions, and taking action—the topics of her chapters—reflect painstaking detail that often goes beyond the level of preparation for meetings that I'd imagined possible. In some cases, the approach seems to make simple tasks seem more complex than they need to be. For example, there is a checklist with 39 points in four categories to consider in selecting the right meeting room. But overall, the depth of the explanations and direction the book provides, underscores the importance of really thinking about what we want to get out of a meeting and how to get there in an intentional way.

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Among the strongest aspects of the book were wonderful resources presented as reproducible handouts, including "Analyzing Group Commitment" and a very useful "Contemporary Agenda Format." A section on setting the norms for how a group will agree to function—a strategy I've used when the dynamics of a group seemed to interfere with its productivity—also presents valuable insight for meeting leaders.

Overall, I'd recommend *Making Meetings Work* as a resource that's especially valuable for new principals, and as a useful refresher for those who want to review the fundamentals of effective meetings. Those looking for innovative, unconventional approaches or novel strategies might be disappointed with this book, but it's a safe bet that if you follow the thorough set of recommendations the authors have compiled, your meetings *will* work.

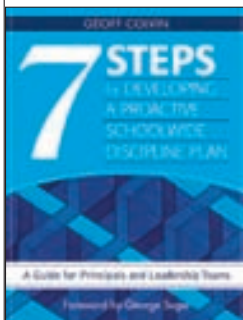
Reviewed by Olaf Jorgenson, Headmaster, Hawaii Preparatory Academy, Kamuela, Hawaii, ojorgenson@hpa.edu.

Preventing Problem Behavior

7 Steps for Developing a Proactive Schoolwide Discipline Plan: A Guide for Principals and Leadership Teams. Geoffrey T. Colvin. Corwin Press, 2007, 133 pages. Available for purchase at www.naesp.org/nprc.

At the end of the 2006-2007 school year, our elementary school was finishing its fifth year using a positive schoolwide discipline plan. Our plan had worked well, but it was in need of a revival and renewal. I was delighted, then, to find *7 Steps for Developing a Proactive Schoolwide Discipline Plan* to guide me in revitalizing a good, but tired, plan.

This book guides the administrator



and advises that social behaviors can be taught, learned, and maintained in the same way as academic skills and concepts.

In the first of two sections, Colvin helps administrators analyze the need for a positive discipline plan and describes the vital characteristics of the best plans. Because administrative support is one of the most significant keys to success of a schoolwide plan, Colvin offers examples of statements a principal should make and actions a principal should take in order to be perceived as

and leadership team to organize the necessary development, definition, and implementation of a behavior plan that enhances school climate

a supporter of the leadership team and the plan itself.

The second section offers the seven steps, which range from "developing a purpose statement" to "sustaining the plan for the long haul." This second part of the book is remarkably easy to enter at any point. It was not difficult for me to use Colvin's steps to find holes in our program. It was heartening, however, to find many parallels to our plan in the book.

The book ends with several appendixes that offer forms that will guide schools at the very beginning of the process through the difficult but necessary planning that is the underpinning of any successful program. The forms for collecting the data necessary to evaluate an existing schoolwide positive discipline plan will simplify the tasks of my leadership team.

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