

# A Balancing Act



I often e-mail principals to gather their insights on education issues that impact their schools. It's a simple routine—I send out an e-mail before my work day is over and wait to hear back from them. When I return to my office the following day, a number of responses are waiting in my e-mail inbox. Nothing unusual about this except that in most cases the e-mail response has a time stamp of 10 or 11 p.m.

I wonder to myself, “When do principals sleep?”

The principalship has never really been a 9-to-5 job and the extensive hours can be attributed to the expanded role that principals play—at school and in the community. In addition to being instructional leaders and building managers, today's principals must be proficient in business, finance, public relations, and marketing. We touched on the length of their day in our November/December 2006 *Principal* (The 24-Hour Principal). For this issue we decided to examine the expanded roles that contribute to being 24-hour principals and how principals can balance these roles—from sharing leadership with teachers to a new way of thinking about the school day—while being effective leaders and maintaining healthy perspectives.

Bob Krajewski, a professor of educational studies at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, profiles two veteran elementary school principals who describe the five most important hats they wear and how they have grown more comfortable wearing them. Gary Schomburg applies Peter Senge's principles for organizational systems thinking to school settings and suggests ways that busy principals can gain healthy perspectives in making daily decisions; LaQuanda Brown discusses how shared leadership with teachers can help principals with their expanded roles and responsibilities (and at the same time professionally develop the next generation of principals); and Joan Gardner uses humor to describe the responsibilities she has on any given day.

In addition, Nancy Protheroe's Research Report examines results of the past four of NAESP's 10-year studies of the K-8 principal, comparing responsibilities, salary, biggest concerns, and characteristics of principals during the past 40 years. This fall, NAESP will release survey results of the 2008 report and it should be interesting to compare the results with past versions of the report to see how the principalship has changed (and in some cases remained the same) during the past decade.

We hope you will join your colleagues at NAESP's 87th Annual Convention and Exposition from April 4-8 in Nashville, Tennessee. Please visit [www.naesp.org](http://www.naesp.org) for more information about the convention. Be sure to also read *Convention News Online*, beginning April 4, to stay abreast of what's happening at our premier networking event for K-8 principals.

## WEB EXCLUSIVES

**Charter Schools and Universities: Partners for Success**—*Maria Garriott*  
**Is Your Intermediate Literacy Instruction Working?**—*Robert L. Ingram III*  
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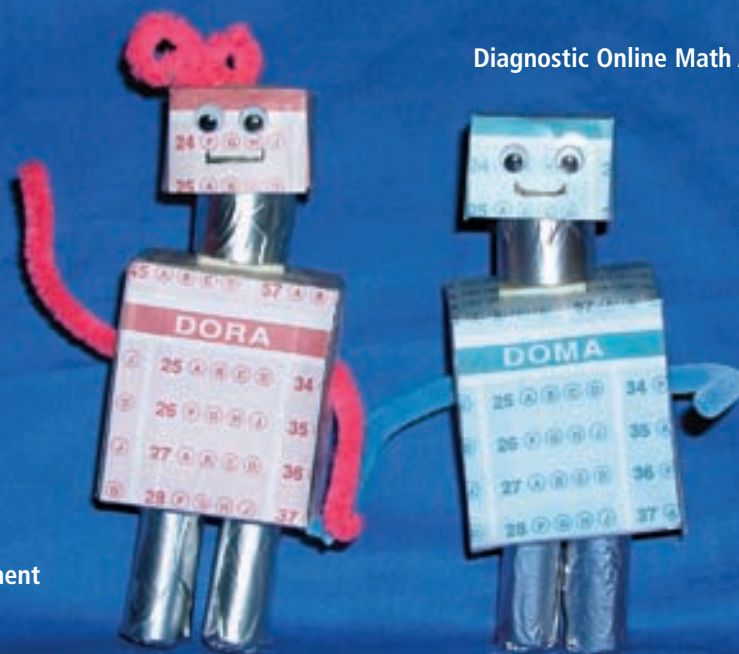
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