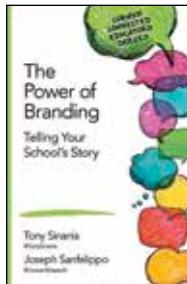


**The Power of Branding: Telling Your School's Story.**  
Tony Sinanis and Joseph Sanfilippo. Corwin Press, 2014, 72 pages.



It is nearly impossible to turn on the news or open a newspaper without hearing about negative press for public schools these days. It's an ongoing problem that can weigh heavily on educators who are working relentlessly to provide their students with the best education possible. The time has come for school leaders to help take charge of changing the public's perception of schools, starting by reading *The Power of Branding* by Tony Sinanis and Joseph Sanfilippo. As the authors write, "People's perception becomes their reality and so we must shape the perception to create the reality we want people to have when they think of us."

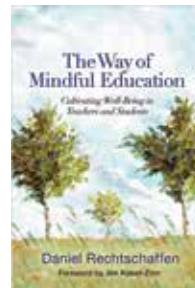
As an educator without a business background, I must admit that I was slightly turned off by the term "branding." However, what the authors are really getting at are easy and powerful ways to meet parents and community members where they are to share the great things happening in your buildings. By doing so, you give a voice to your students and can provide your community with a positive perspective on your school. The authors share, "telling the story of our districts, schools, or classrooms is a must—we want the community to know what is happening and we want them to feel a certain way about what is happening. We can control these reactions by devoting time to branding our spaces and telling our stories."

This book is just one of many great short books in the Corwin Connected Educator series, and it is written in the voice of the authors, who are also practitioners. If you've ever heard Sinanis and Sanfilippo speak on the BrandEd podcast, then you'll know that the book reads as if they're talking to you as

you read it. It is short enough that you could read it in one hour, yet packed full of enough stories, examples, and resources that you will fill your toolbox with a variety of social media tools to start sharing your school's story with your community. As the authors write, "No matter where you go from here, never give up the opportunity to say something great about your classroom, school, or district."

*Reviewed by Jessica Johnson, principal of Dodge Land Elementary School in Juneau, Wisconsin. NAESP MEMBER*

**The Way of Mindful Education: Cultivating Well-Being in Teachers and Students.** Daniel Rechtschaffen. W.W. Norton & Company, 2014, 318 pages.



How much better would your school be if the teachers in your building were focused, attentive, and compassionate? Extend those same thoughts to students. Would your school be an ideal learning environment if your students were trained to handle the stress and trauma that can keep them from realizing their full potential? In *The Way of Mindful Education*, Daniel Rechtschaffen offers educators the tools to develop classrooms and schools that cultivate attention while promoting kindness toward ourselves and others.

Rechtschaffen, a therapist and founder of the Mindful Education Institute, has trained educators around the world. In his book, he discusses the history of mindful education and provides the reader with ample research supporting the benefits of this unique approach. According to Rechtschaffen, mindful-

ness was birthed after World War II, when the World Health Organization commissioned a study on the psychological health of European children. Researchers and educators finally began to understand the emotional needs of children in the context of their academic and worldly success. Rechtschaffen presents the science behind mindfulness to support its use in education. He believes that mindfulness, "[c]ultivates attention, compassion, happiness, and relaxation and decreases impulsivity, anxiety, and other emotional states."

After establishing the credibility of mindfulness, Rechtschaffen goes to work on teachers first, encouraging them to begin a personal journey toward mindfulness that will serve as a good example to their students. Readers may be tempted to skip this section and move on to how mindfulness can be applied in the classroom. Rechtschaffen would suggest that we have to, "[t]ake care of ourselves and cultivate our own mindful practice, and what we need to embody our practice in the world."

It is in the final two chapters that Rechtschaffen shares the "how to" of mindfulness in the classroom and the curriculum, outlining the essential ingredients of the mindful classroom and the qualities of a mindful teacher. Most importantly, he provides the reader with ample resources and lessons that can be used immediately in the classroom.

While the concept of mindfulness may initially seem complex and unconventional, it is a low-risk, high-reward approach to helping teachers and students manage the stresses that impact their daily performance. That alone makes it worthy of consideration by any school leader who values the emotional needs of students and staff members.

*Reviewed by Christopher Wooleyhand, principal of Richard Henry Lee Elementary School in Glen Burnie, Maryland, and an adjunct instructor of teacher leadership at McDaniel College. NAESP MEMBER*