Ideas to Live By


“When the role of the principal is successful, principals have rich, fulfilling experiences.”

Author Sandra Harris does a superb job of showing how those words define the award-winning principals she cites. Her book is an easy read and so full of good ideas that I can’t wait to try some of them out. Here are just a few examples:

- Scott Hollinger plays classical music all day, every day, in his school in McAllen, Texas, by loading 200 CDs into a player for all to hear;
- Carol Loflin of San Ramon, California, participates in a monthly authors’ lunch, where teachers select students to share their writing with her during a lunch period;
- Karen Lyon of DeLand, Florida, developed a wellness program for her staff to encourage better eating and exercise habits; and
- Gloria Kumagai of St. Paul, Minnesota, addresses three simple team-building questions to her staff: Why did you come to this school? Why do you stay? What do you have to offer? She starts with the teacher who has been at the school the longest and ends with the newest teacher.

Harris knows that busy principals need ideas that just jump out and touch you, and this book does so in addressing key areas of leadership, campus culture, school improvement planning, and many others. It is written in an easy-to-read format, with chapters organized by topics and ending with Web sites for further research.

Harris has done an outstanding job of organizing the best practices and ideas, making them meaningful and easy to implement. Each of the principals included in the book is listed with his or her contact information, school demographics, and awards. For the rest of us, this is a must-have book.

**Rita R. Martinez, Principal**
C.W. Harris Elementary School
Phoenix, Arizona
rmartinez@harr.cartwright.k12.az.us
Safety From the Inside Out


In a day when the term “school safety” elicits mental images of the terrors at Columbine High School and small children toting guns to school, Creating a Safe & Friendly School: Lunchrooms, Playgrounds, and More takes a simple and straightforward approach in tackling issues surrounding the protection of schoolchildren.

Compiled by the Northeast Foundation for Children (NEFC), a non-profit educational organization dedicated to the improvement of K–8 teaching, this book offers 17 articles, excerpted from NEFC’s Responsive Classroom Newsletter, that focus on “schools as respectful learning communities where educators honor the social context of learning and use knowledge of students’ development to inform all decisions.”

Covering each area of a school’s operation—from bus procedures to cafeteria and playground conduct guidelines to schoolwide norms—the authors survey an intricate connection of all elements to the larger whole of a school’s existence. Climate, they contend, is established through careful attention to minor details that are understood and accepted by each member of the school community.

Federal studies indicate that 80 percent of problem behavior in schools can be prevented if schoolwide groups are created to foster a safe and caring school environment in which all members feel connected and supported. Creating a Safe & Friendly School lays the groundwork essential to this environment and sets a course for schools to become safe havens for children.

Despite an extremely simplistic approach, if school personnel follow NEFC’s recommendations, they can create environments wherein all stakeholders feel not only safe but valued and important.

Christopher J. Peal, Principal
Meadowbrook Elementary School
Novi, Michigan
pealc@walledlake.k12.mi.us

Our members say it best

“As an ASCD member for over 20 years, I have appreciated the access to comprehensive research publications, especially in curriculum. The information is timely, relevant, and thoroughly helps me address the challenges as a suburban educational leader.”

Dr. Connie Hurst-Bayless, Assistant Superintendent
St. Louis, MO
ASCD Member

Join the Leaders, Join ASCD!
Go to www.ascd.org/joinascd

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
1703 North Beauregard Street • Alexandria, VA 22311-1714, USA • www.ascd.org