Meeting Organizational Needs

As the school’s chief financial officer, principals must have a good handle on the instructional budget, which can be thousands of dollars. Your budgeting practices can make a difference in whether or not your staff has enough supplies to last through the end of the school year. Principals also oversee thousands of “flow through” dollars if the school has a school store, takes parent-funded field trips, or conducts fundraisers. You are responsible as a steward of the resources that your community has entrusted to your care.

In your role as principal, you are also the school’s public information officer. Many community members, who may never enter your school, base their opinions regarding the school’s programs and students solely on the information you provide and on your appearance and public behavior. Therefore, principals must always be aware of their public persona, even when they are doing personal activities like eating in a restaurant or browsing in a bookstore. Principals also must shape the atmosphere inside the school building by greeting students in the morning and creating and sustaining a climate favorable to learning.

All of these roles don’t even take into account the principal’s job as a traffic-control officer, safety inspector, instructional technology specialist, dietician, health-care provider, and inventory-control manager. As the saying goes: “Jack of all trades, master of none, though oftentimes better than master of one.” But principals cannot afford to be “master of none” because every child in school depends on you to be “master of all” of these roles.

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