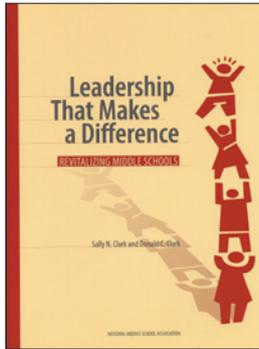


**Leadership That Makes a Difference: Revitalizing Middle Schools.** Sally N. Clark and Donald C. Clark. National Middle School Association, 2008, 134 pages. Available at [www.nmsa.org](http://www.nmsa.org).

*Leadership That Makes a Difference* makes it clear that an effective middle school leader must be multi-dimensional and visionary. Sally and Donald Clark organize the text into five sections, each focusing on a different area in which a successful middle-level leader should be skilled and trained.

First, the Clarks provide a clear description of the qualifications of an effective middle-level leader in today's interconnected global society:

- A strong knowledge base about the middle-level curriculum;
- Extensive experience in teaching middle-level students (10- to 15-year-olds);
- Administrative experience in a middle-level environment before becoming a principal; and
- Knowledge about research-based best practices that have proved



to work for middle-level students.

Second, the authors inform and provide effective methods for how school leaders must

provide continuous and effective opportunities for students and teachers to participate in learning communities.

The authors then describe the leadership qualities that must be prevalent in an age of strict accountability, such as:

- High level of morality;
- High knowledge level of the change process;
- Emotional intelligence;
- High level of commitment to creation and sharing; and
- Capacity to bring focus and alignment to complex systems.

The authors also provide a rationale for collaboration among school staff

and for the school council being a permanent fixture in the middle school culture, and highlight several effective ways to accomplish this. The result is increased improvement in the overall program effectiveness, enhanced ability of the school to respond to problems, increased teacher commitment, better decision-making, and increased teacher satisfaction and morale.

The final section of the book is extremely powerful and thought-provoking, highlighting characteristics and implications for strong expertise and high-functioning school leaders at the middle school level.

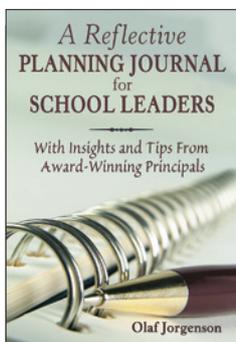
This is a practical text for all middle school leaders to read, grasp, and share because of its clear organization and its collection of research-based information. All educators committed to engaging middle-level teachers and students should read and discuss this book with their colleagues.

*Reviewed by LaQuanda Brown, Principal, King-Danforth Elementary School, Macon, Georgia, [lybrown.danforth@bibb.k12.ga.us](mailto:lybrown.danforth@bibb.k12.ga.us).*

**A Reflective Planning Journal for School Leaders: With Insights and Tips from Award-Winning Principals.** Olaf Jorgenson. Corwin Press, 2008, 77 pages. Available at [www.corwinpress.com](http://www.corwinpress.com).

I'm currently serving as a mentor principal to a protégé as part of NAESP's Peer Assisted Leadership Services program. In the midst of planning for this new role, I was delighted to come across Olaf Jorgenson's planning journal.

Jorgenson has done an outstanding job of designing this book to be a compass for new principals as they travel through the first years on the job. The text is easy to read and is organized in a flexible manner beneficial to principals at all levels and to diverse learning communities. Each chapter highlights a specific month on the school calendar, offering thought-provoking quotes, challenging questions, and specific



tips from award-winning school principals.

As the reader travels through the months, reflective thought is focused on items of importance. During the

month of October, for example, consideration is given to the value of communication styles. In February, thought is directed to energizing staff with novelties in faculty gatherings. By May, questions focus on the importance and difficulties of maintaining visibility. May is also the time to spotlight celebratory events, such as staff retirements.

Collaboration about good practice is a remarkable way to generate creativity and Jorgenson, a principal himself, threads through each chapter the

cooperative resources of meritorious principals. They have provided some of their personal tricks of the trade, which even the most seasoned principals will find interesting.

The book concludes with a few general ideas from Jorgenson's own experiences. Small but powerful points are made to ensure that consideration is given to base values such as the balance of work and family, as well as the health of the individual.

I truly believe that the use of this book during the exchanges of a mentor and protégé promises powerful application, and I definitely suggest that this book also be used as a key tool by both aspiring and experienced principals.

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