A Principal’s Evolution

We’ve all been there, fresh from one stage in our lives—be it that first job after graduating from college, moving from one city to another, or getting married—and ready to embark on a new one. As we begin that journey, our lack of experience may be hard to overcome. But as we continue on our passage, we learn lessons, gain insight, gather expertise, and transition from seeking advice and guidance to dishing it out. It’s this cycle, as it pertains to the principalship, which we have chronicled in this issue of Principal.

The theme articles describe four major stages in principals’ careers— aspiring principal, novice principal, mid-career principal, and retiring principal—and how to thrive in each one. For example, Mary C. Clement offers advice to aspiring principals preparing for the all-important job interview. Principal Bonnie Cangelosi outlines a model she has found to be successful for developing teacher leaders. And for those considering (or approaching) retirement, Laurel Schmidt provides a host of options to choose from after you leave the principal’s office.

It goes without saying that professional development is a critical component in your progression through the principalship. That’s why NAESP’s 88th Annual Convention and Exposition, the largest professional development conference designed specifically for pre-K-8 principals and assistant principals, is a can’t-miss event. This year’s conference takes place April 2-6 in New Orleans, and we’ve provided a convention preview, beginning on page 35, that covers all the highlights of the host city, from food and music to tourist attractions and transportation.

Also included in the convention coverage is an article about how the Gulf Coast schools have progressed in the years since Hurricane Katrina made landfall, thanks to the generous contributions of NAESP members through the Principal-to-Principal Relief Fund, and to compassionate individuals who reached out when help was most needed. The firsthand accounts from school officials in Mississippi and Louisiana illustrate the kindness that shone through after the storm and helped to bring some semblance of normalcy to students, teachers, and school staff.

After you’ve taken the time to read all that’s offered in this edition of Principal, go online at www.naesp.org/principal to read Web Exclusive articles that discuss student discipline and the role of school psychologists.

Let us know what you think of this issue by sending us an e-mail at publications@naesp.org. Also, as we prepare for the 2009-2010 editorial year, we’d love to hear your suggestions for theme topics for next year’s issues of Principal. Simply write “theme suggestions” in the e-mail subject line.

—Vanessa St. Gerard and Kaylen Tucker

Interested in submitting an article to Principal?

Principal magazine is always seeking articles on timely and informative topics from those who know our readership best—principals. Writing for the magazine is a great way to help other principals while giving you fresh insights into your own professional development. For submission guidelines, go to www.naesp.org/writing.
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