In Pursuit of Excellence

The phrase “A chain is only as strong as its weakest link” rings especially true in the school setting, where the instructional ability of each faculty member cumulatively affects the culture, teaching, and learning—in other words, the success—of a school. That’s why, as you begin your school year, this issue of Principal focuses on how to foster excellence in your teachers.

The U.S. Department of Education defines instructional leadership as “leadership within a school or district that develops, guides, and assists classroom teachers in delivering high-quality instruction and that monitors the delivery of instruction for continuous improvement.” Whether you have a new teacher who needs extra guidance and support, a veteran who lacks the motivation he or she once displayed when first entering the profession, or a teacher with extraordinary skills who can help train others, the most effective principals are those who continuously challenge and develop all their teachers.

As described in the theme articles included in this issue, success in the classroom can best be achieved by building on the assets of others. For example, principals must seek out their brightest teachers to provide insight to peers and also must help struggling teachers to develop their strengths. The authors of the theme articles explain how to do just that, plus more on how to empower different factions of teachers.

We’ve also included a Hot Topic article that addresses the concerns raised following the release of a federal study citing abuse related to seclusion and restraint practices in schools. To ensure your students are kept safe, the article provides recommendations from the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders on when and how to appropriately use such practices.

We would appreciate receiving your thoughts and feedback on this issue of Principal. Simply send an e-mail to publications@naesp.org.
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