Lead the Way

It is clear that the improvement of our nation’s schools is dependent not only on the teaching and learning that occurs in school buildings on a daily basis, but also on the strategic work that individual principals, schools, districts, universities, and other institutions employ to prepare future leaders.

At the front lines of the process are principals, the ones working alongside teachers who will one day take the leap into the principalship—a leap that should not be taken blindly. By identifying those teachers who show potential, and subsequently mentoring and training them for the role, principals can start laying the groundwork for a pipeline of high-quality candidates.

The authors of “Fit for the Principalship,” (page 10) say it best when they write, “Capacity-building, then, must involve principals looking behind them and developing leaders in their schools and systems, providing them with experiences that will leave competent leadership in the district or school if they decide to leave.”

School districts and universities are next in line for ensuring that aspiring principals are ready for the complex and ever-changing set of responsibilities that lie ahead. Collaboration between the two institutions, with input from principals, in establishing effective principal preparation programs is critical, writes Mary B. Martin in “Bridge the Divide” (page 28).

These and the other theme articles we’ve assembled in this issue describe promising programs from across the country that are committed to preparing educators for the principal’s office. In the following pages, you’ll learn the different ways principals can get involved in the process of training the next generation of building-level leaders.

And if you’ve already retired from the principal’s office—or approaching that stage—consider participating in NAESP’s National Mentor Program, which is designed to engage experienced principals to give back to their profession by supporting new principals through mentoring. Learn more at www.naesp.org/National_Mentor_Program.aspx.

The publication of this issue of the magazine marks not only the impending end of the school year, but also the end of our editorial year. That means we’ve begun working on the five 2010-2011 issues. Below are the themes we’ve selected; if any of them pique your interest, consider submitting an article for possible publication. Until we meet again in this space this fall, have a wonderful summer!

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