

You're the Principal! Now What?

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Principal

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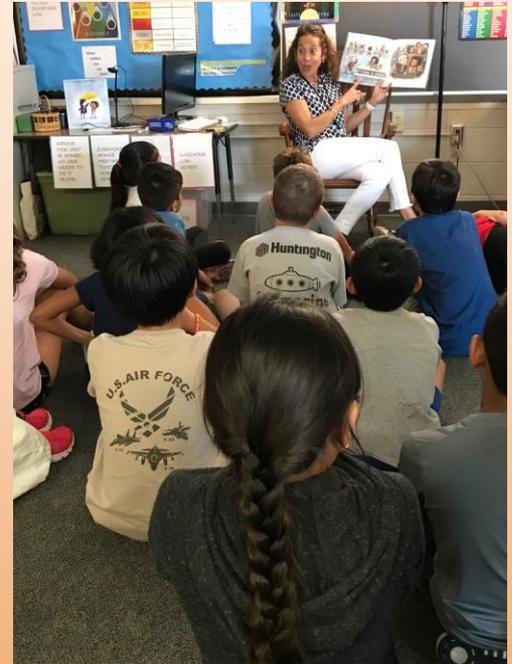
Dublin, Ohio

Introductions

Tell us your name, location, and the type/level of school

I'm Jen Schwanke from Dublin City Schools in Ohio. I'm currently an elementary school principal.

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“Proactive Reflection”

Let’s look ahead to see what might be your biggest challenges. Focus on:

Knowing yourself

Knowing your community

Knowing your school



Biggest stressors may be...

Politics or pressure from the district office

State/Federal mandates

Curriculum

Understanding and managing data

Community pressure

Lack of support

Staff issues

Loneliness

Family

Self care

Lack of knowledge (policy, procedure,
community relations, staff)

Fear

Workload

Reflection Question #1

What do you predict will be your biggest stressors?

- Choose 3
- Add to the chat box... *and* write them down
- Keep them in a place in which you can reflect later in the year

“I’ve had a lot of
worries in my life,
most of which
never happened”

—Mark Twain



Being a principal requires physical and emotional strength...

A sense of purpose...

A willingness to change your mind...

...And a work ethic unmatched by many others

Part 1: Managing Tasks and Priorities



Poll Question

Given your school, your role, your demographic, and the culture in your building, what are the non-negotiables?

1. Discipline Management
2. Financial Resource Management
3. Special Education
4. Data/Assessment
5. Culture

Non-Negotiable Priorities

- Safety of students and staff
- Budget
- Legal responsibilities
- Discipline



If... then...



If the non-negotiables are firmly established, then you can think about:

1. Your goals
2. Your professional responsibilities
3. Your dreams
4. How to prioritize

Prioritizing



- Questions to ask:
 - What can I handle quickly?
 - What can wait? Might it even go away if I wait?
 - Am I procrastinating? Why?
- Recurring balls to juggle:
 - Email
 - Parent response
 - Professional development
 - Curriculum and instruction
 - Facility
 - Staying organized and neat
 - Managing the list

Periodic Priorities



- Hiring
- Assessment (state and district)
- Evaluations
- PTO, staff, full moons and holidays

Delegating



- What things might someone else be paid to do?
- What do you hate to do– and someone else might love?
- What do you insist upon owning?
- What would be better if you *didn't* own?

What if I can't delegate? (i.e. email)

Email



- Set limits—for yourself and others
- Touch it once
- Essential questions
 - Does this require a response?
 - Will I be able to find this information if and when I need it?
 - How quickly does this need addressed?

Keeping track ...of yourself



Finding a personalized system

Notebooks

Digital management

Post-its

A really good secretary

Unexpected Challenges



- All the planning in the world can't address much of your work
- The danger in “always” and “never”
- The beauty and safety of district policy and procedures

Part 2: Balance



Saying no... or not



- It's a marathon... don't be a hero and run the whole thing this year
- Reserve your mental and physical strength
- Essential questions
 - Is it part of my job?
 - If I say no, what justifiable criticism will come my way?
 - How will I get better by saying no?
 - Who will be affected by my decision?

Poll Question

Which Category is Most Applicable to You?

- I feel I am naturally able to balance my work with other things that are important to me.
- For me, balance is a work in progress—something I'm always working toward.
- Being a principal has unended my sense of balance, and I'm not sure how to get it back.

Work/Life Balance

- Friends, family, and the people who matter
- Set boundaries
- Laugh
- Health
- Prepare for hard times; take advantage of slow times



Mental Balance



- Pace yourself
- Know your limits
- Know your importance
- Life hacks
- Know what is important to you
- What is your Plan B and Plan C?
- Embrace the learning
- Making peace with 25-50-25

Principal Life Hacks



- Family
- Friends
- Health and wellness
- Reading/social media/social decisions
- Perspective

Any other life hacks? Please share!

Brief Tips for a good year

- Follow your heart, your body, and your energy
- Slow down. When in doubt, wait.
- Don't say, "At..., we..."
- Check references. Extensively.
- Model.
- Do things no one else wants to do.
- See every kid every day.
- Show up.
- Send cards. Say thanks.

Accept what **IS**,
let go of what **WAS**,
and have *faith*
in what **WILL BE.**

Q and A

Reflections?

Questions?

Ideas?



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