

A Million Little Things



The first day of kindergarten. Learning to read by third grade. Reaching proficiency on annual assessments. High school graduation day. While these are important milestones on a student's education journey, you can't discount walking in the annual book character day parade, getting the good news call of the day, joining a student council, or attending a first middle school dance as critical markers on the learning continuum. It is the million little things along a student's course that constitute a well-rounded

and complete education that prepares them for life and career.

School leaders ensure that the daily—and even seemingly mundane—moments in a student's career crystallize to create an aligned and powerful learning experience. According to the 2015 Professional Standards for Education Leaders, principals must “align and focus systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment within and across grade levels to promote student academic success, love of learning, the identities and habits of learners, and healthy sense of self.” This issue of *Principal* magazine explores various elements of such an approach to leadership, which include:

- Continuous and developmentally appropriate support as students transition from pre-K to the early grades, and then to middle school and beyond;
- Instructional leadership that aligns curriculum, assignments, and assessments, ensuring student learning is relevant and features engaging assignments; and
- Seamless integration of academics with recess, physical education, and opportunities for student leadership.

And because students aren't the only ones who experience transitions and need support, we also hear from Oregon principals John George and Rachael George on advice for principals who are moving to a new school environment. “Transitions involving a change of schools or levels are hard, but in the long run, they can offer so much potential to grow and learn as a person and professional,” they offer in “Oh, the Places You'll Go” (see page 34).

So, while you are setting goals for the new year, I hope that this issue of *Principal* magazine helps you rein in the million little things you encounter in a typical day at your school to align teaching and learning for the benefit of the students you serve.

— Kaylen Tucker, Ph.D.

 Contact me on Twitter
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**LEADING
LESSONS**

ALIGN YOUR LEADERSHIP

Use this issue's *Leading Lessons* guide to enhance collaborative leadership with assistant principals. In it, noted author Peter DeWitt defines collective efficacy and provides strategies to establish trust, develop goals, and help assistant principals spend more time on instruction.

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Printed in the USA by **The YGS Group**

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