

# Back to the Future



While the 21st century is in full swing and the nation's schools have made great leaps in education technology, we are still grappling with some of the challenges of decades past. A quick trip through the *Principal* magazine archive illuminates the point, with a 1991 technology-themed issue focused on what were then *new* technology tools—"electronic mail" and a portable "computer in your lap"—while a 1997 issue addressed topics that are still evolving, such as teacher training, data safety, digital literacy, and infrastructure. What is even more insightful is the January 2000 issue, "Technology in 21st Century Schools," which focused, again, on teacher training, as well as making sound technology choices and the digital divide.

This brief review of leadership topics illuminates that as the role of technology in schools continues to evolve and expand, principals will need to be at the forefront of innovation as well as continuously tend to equity and instructional leadership. Consequently, the articles in this issue of *Principal* magazine provide a forward-looking overview of school technology leadership—from comprehensive topics like digital equity to specific strategies like using digital badges to motivate students. In the opening article, "Schools of the Future," author Thomas C. Murray frames the issues by describing the Future Ready Schools (FRS) initiative. Murray, who serves as the director of innovation for FRS, writes that education technology must support "research-based, highly effective instructional pedagogy." As for the principal's role, Murray states they must "lead with a vision for learning, not technology."

This magazine issue also continues the Principal's Brief series for early career principals, tackling what every principal should know about school law, and previews a message from Michael Schmoker, who is a 2017 National Principals Conference keynote speaker. In "The Power of Focus," Schmoker explains why the prioritization of initiatives is necessary to sustain school improvement. As always, I hope that this issue of *Principal* magazine feeds your knowledge base and helps you enact leadership strategies that will prepare the nation's students for promising futures. 📧

—Kaylen Tucker, Ph.D.



## DO THIS

Want to prioritize some of the ideas presented in this issue of *Principal* magazine? Here's how to get started.

**Digital Equity.** Survey your school and community to find out the kinds of devices and internet connection families have at home. Then work with your leadership team, district, and community to address the gaps.

**Data Safety.** Learn the Student Data Principles and dedicate a faculty meeting to discussing them with staff.

**Twitter Chats.** Participate in your first Twitter chat. Past that stage? Volunteer to moderate one.

**School Law.** Learn to "issue spot" so that you know when to seek guidance from a peer or the district office.

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