


# Classrooms in Focus



Is it student-focused? That's the question Michigan principal Ben Gilpin urges teachers to reflect on as they redesign learning spaces. "As principal, I want everyone to know that students are at the heart of all decisions. This can be seen from the moment you walk into the building," he writes in his article for this issue, "Leading With a Design Mind." The other education leaders who contributed to this issue of *Principal*

magazine echo Gilpin's student-centered approach as they reflect on next generation learning and the instructional leadership that is needed to guide it. From makerspaces and outdoor learning to restorative justice practices and instructional rounds, school leaders are charged with responding to today's realities—shifting demographics, technological advances, and new policies and initiatives—all in ways that keep students' well-rounded learning experiences at the center.

This thread of student-centered decision-making even links to research and recommendations to bolster principals' own health that is offered in this issue by professors Sally Beisser and Randal Peters. They contend that principals' healthful and mindful leadership practices have the potential to impact students and the entire school community. "Beyond the impact of these actions on your own health, stamina, and sustainability, they are powerful examples to your students," they write in their article, "Here's to Your Health." Along with generally improving work-life balance, Beisser and Peters also recommend that principals adopt a more collaborative leadership style with a "well-defined team structure." I hope this issue of *Principal* gives you the tools and strategies you need to strengthen your leadership team and keep classrooms rightly focused on students. 

—Kaylen Tucker, Ph.D.



## In This Issue

### The Nation's Top Principals

This year's class of National Distinguished Principals were recently honored in Washington, D.C. Please take the time to reach out to congratulate your state's honorees. A full salute to these leaders starts on page 39.

### Member Spotlight

Find out how Virginia principal Lynmara Colón leverages her social work background to connect with a diverse student population. (See page 50.)

### Essentials for Early Career Principals

The second installment of this yearlong series is a how-to guide to incorporate a book study into the professional development opportunities you offer your staff. (See page 32.)



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Printed in the USA

Design and Production



Cover: Getty Images/Fuse

