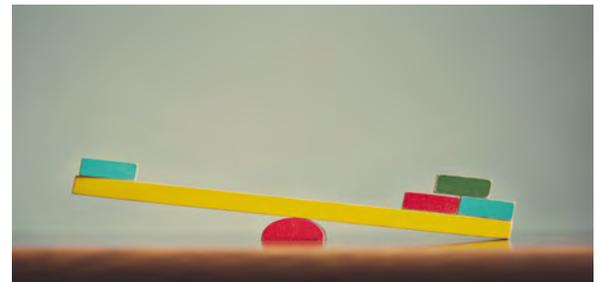
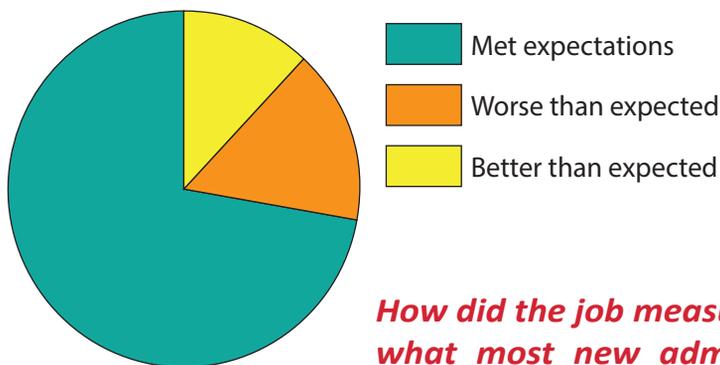


New Principal Connection

Insights from new principals, for new principals

With the end of the academic year quickly approaching, NAESP asked the National Panel of New Principals to reflect on their overall experience and lessons learned as new administrators both prior to and in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

PRINCIPAL EXPECTATIONS VS. REALITY



How did the job measure up? The reality of being a principal was what most new administrators expected (72%) both as they entered the role and as they navigated the COVID-19 pandemic.

◆ I can truly say that it was balanced with what I expected, better than what I expected, and worse than expected. There were moments where I couldn't believe what I was facing to situations that I felt I had been preparing for all my life.

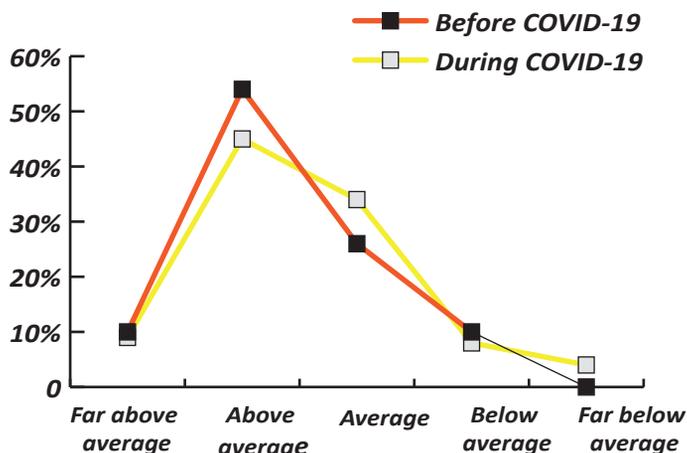
◆ There are far more aspects of the job that I hadn't considered.

◆ Definitely much more challenging than I had expected.

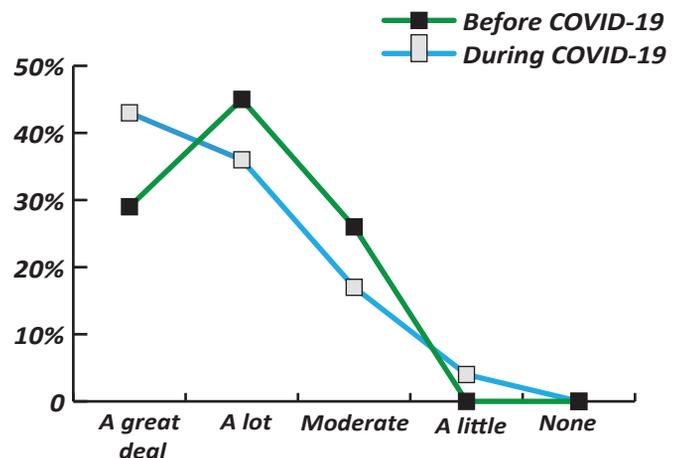
◆ While I had been an AP for 5 years prior to becoming a principal, I still did not feel prepared though I am not sure you can be!

◆ I never anticipated attempting to lead a school from afar during a pandemic.

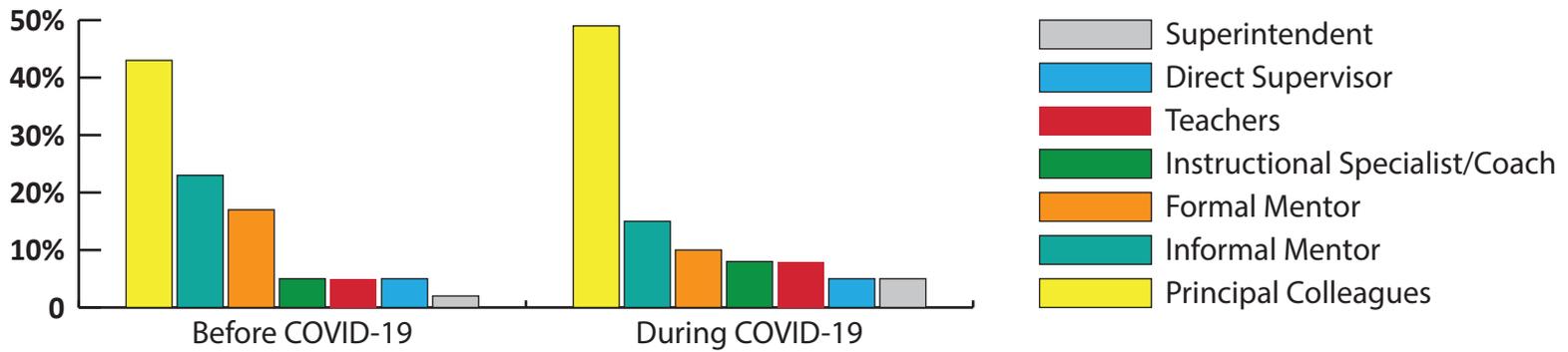
NEW PRINCIPAL JOB SATISFACTION



NEW PRINCIPAL STRESS LEVEL



SOURCES OF PRINCIPAL SUPPORT



Who provided the most help for early career principals overall throughout the school year? Fellow principal colleagues were there for one another before (43%) and even more so (49%) during the Coronavirus pandemic.

TOP 3 PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES BEFORE COVID-19

- ◆ Implementing Change - 52%
- ◆ Time Management - 48%
- ◆ Understanding Politics - 33%

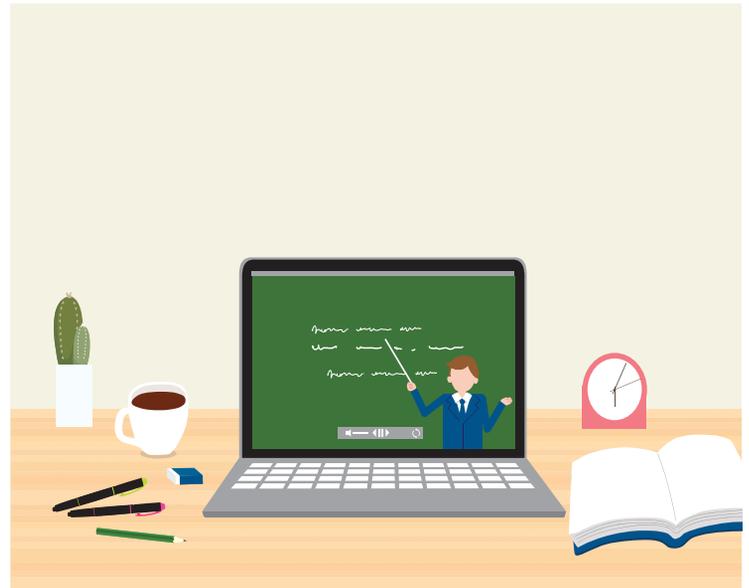
TOP 3 PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES DURING COVID-19

- ◆ Implementing Change - 49%
- ◆ Time Management - 42%
- ◆ Creating a Clear School Vision - 26%

Implementing change and time management were consistent challenges for new principals throughout the school year. Creating a clear school vision became a more prevalent challenge as a result of the pandemic.

GO-TO RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION/SUPPORT BEFORE COVID-19

- ◆ Books/Articles- 45%
- ◆ Social Media - 43%
- ◆ Conferences- 24%



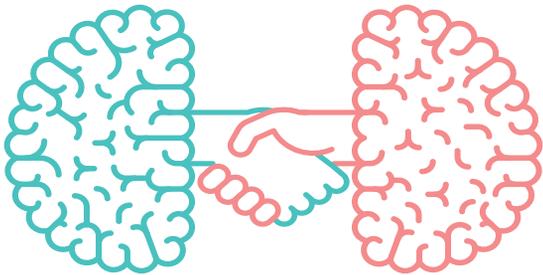
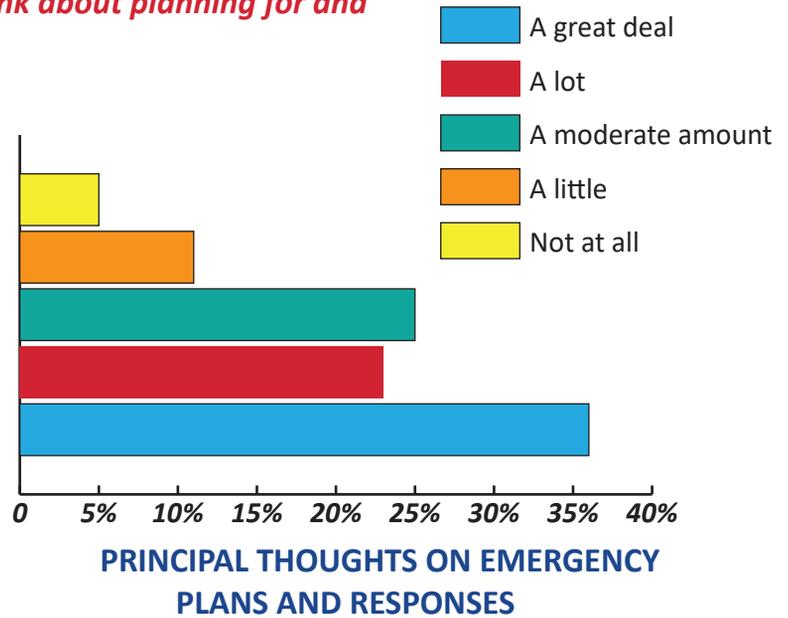
GO-TO RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION/SUPPORT DURING COVID-19

- ◆ Social Media- 54%
- ◆ Webinars/Videos/Podcasts - 35%
- ◆ Books/Articles- 35%

New principals shifted their methods of acquiring support resources during COVID-19 compared to early on in the school year. Social media, webinars, videos, and podcasts became dominant sources of information as social distancing became the new normal.

Did the pandemic impact how new principals think about planning for and responding to school emergencies?

- I have learned from past experiences that you cannot plan for all events. You need to take the information at hand, create a plan with the resources available, carry out the plan knowing you will need to adjust as you receive feedback and continue to adjust as the situation continues.
- I have learned a lot about who to lean on in a time of crisis!
- I don't think it really changed anything for me as I have always put relationships and people (basic needs) above all else.



New principals shared the strategies they have implemented to address distance learning and managing staff through COVID-19.

- Check-in surveys with staff and parent community.
- No technology available, used packets to reinforce basic skills.
- Trying to have fun with staff even if it is virtually. Keeping their spirits up in this new way of work that we did NOT choose.
- Pulling back on academic expectations and getting back to relationships as the priority.
- Over communicate and try to bring a sense of normalcy when possible.
- Using Google Sheets as a request for assistance tool for teachers who need help with contacting families. Office staff then use the sheet to make calls and communicate outcome to teachers.
- Using social media to share my own challenges with parents and students.
- Virtual morning announcements. I quickly began hosting daily office hours in Zoom and a Friday memo of updates to faculty each week.
- Voxer, Seesaw, Zoom, Google Meet, YouTube, Webinars, and Social Media.
- Meeting with staff through Microsoft Teams. I'm able to relay information, read their body language and have normal non-school related conversations.
- My heart - providing support and compassion.
- Twitter articles.
- Lance Loya teammates emails.
- Becoming a student in each teacher's Google classroom.
- Email. This sounds odd, but by giving those daily breakdowns and updates, it is our primary communication tool.
- Thanking people profusely for their participation!
- Shared leadership opportunities.
- We are having weekly coaching meetings with our staff that last 40 minutes. They are not mandatory, but have been attended by all of our staff. It allows them to ask any questions they feel are important. We are able to give them an answer if we have it. We coach them through any technology issues they may have and we also go over a self care strategy that would be important to consider during this time.

How new principals addressed school challenges prior to COVID-19

- Patience. One day at a time.
- A mentor principal has helped a great deal.
- Brought in support staff from central office.
- Networked with colleagues in and out of my district and took whatever training I could find.
- Using data to address the need for/importance of change and how it would positively address our stakeholders. Showing research that also supported the work we were doing in our school community.
- Ramping up the amount of community outreach we were implementing with parents.
- Communicate, communicate, communicate! Making sure that communications were in all of the languages spoken in our school.
- Relationship building and commitment to the Danielson Framework. Also, used the essential practices for school improvement needs assessment for school vision.

How new principals addressed school challenges during COVID-19

- Worked closely with colleagues in the district.
- Increased communication. Set up systems for asking questions and sharing answers.
- Priority lists and delegation.
- Take each day as it comes and adapt as needed.
- Mentors and principal colleagues continue to be the best supports and thought partners.
- Zoom trainings, webinars, tutorials, and distance learning plan. We used our classroom experts to train others.
- Communication is key. We are finding ourselves in a new normal where we are having to communicate new ways to present learning for students who have different ways to access information. In a perfect world, all students would have devices and access to internet and we would have classroom meetings with our students with amazing instruction still occurring, but that is NOT the reality.
- Just keep trying!

New principals understand the importance of social emotional wellbeing and shared how they have modeled self care for their school community.

- I have tried to keep people informed about what I am doing at home, and give constant reminders that family comes first.
- I admit to when I need to take time for myself and I always end the week encouraging staff to step away from the computer and do something they enjoy.
- I have tried to model balance between work and life. Turning technology off and spending time outdoors, relaxing, and with family.
- I purchased a year subscription for entire staff to Teacher Fit.
- Our staff meets daily via zoom. There is a period where we just honestly share and call on each other for positive confirmations.
- I started a Whatsapp group and try to provide a calming, non-judgmental presence.
- Sharing photos of doing things other than work (cooking, outdoors, family time).

About the Panel

NAESP's National Panel of New Principals is the first and only national program dedicated to gathering and sharing the experiences of new and early career principals in rural, urban, and suburban schools across the country.

Learn more at www.newprincipal.org.

About NAESP

The mission of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) is to lead in the advocacy and support for elementary and middle level principals and other education leaders in their commitment to all children.

Visit www.naesp.org for more information.