

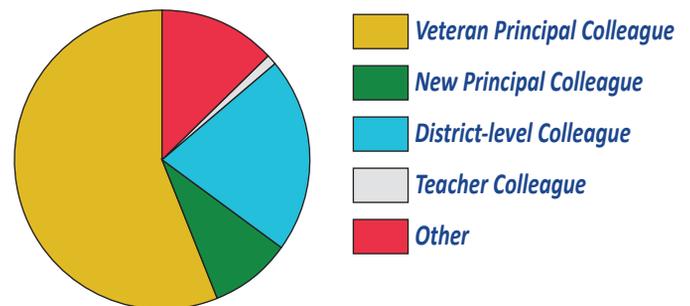
New Principal Connection

Insights from new principals, for new principals

In this issue of *New Principal Connection*, first and second year principals share insights into mentoring and its impact on their role as new administrators. The panel also reflected on lessons learned 6 months into the school year, what they wish they knew at the outset of the year, and resources they would recommend to others entering the profession.



87% of new principals have someone in their life who they consider to be their mentor. Most often, the mentor is a **veteran principal colleague**.



Types of Mentors

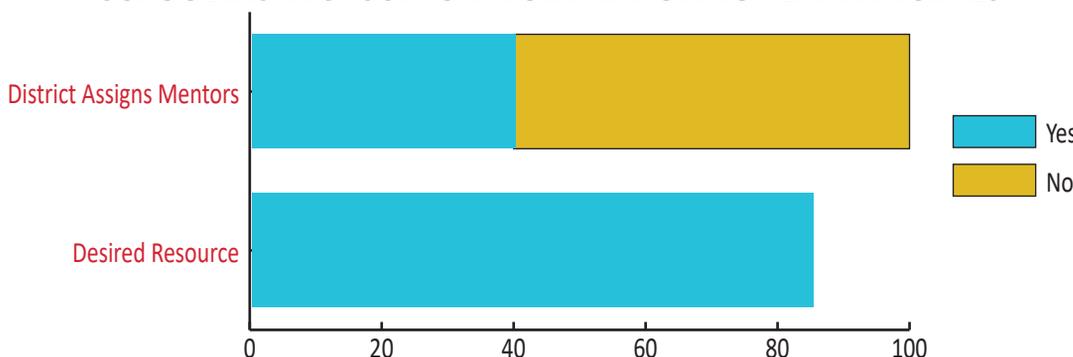
WHAT NEW PRINCIPALS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THEIR MENTOR

- ★ Having a mentor is invaluable. I can't imagine transitioning into this job without one!
- ★ Hearing from their experiences and them giving me advice has been so instrumental in my growth.
- ★ I often can run ideas or problems by my mentor for input beforehand.

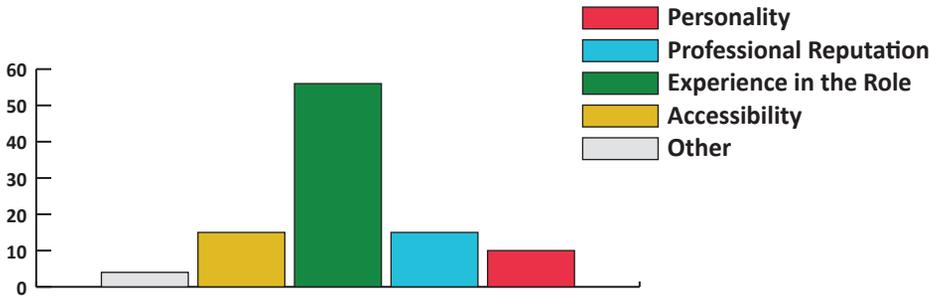


believe the relationship with a mentor has benefited them in their role as a new principal.

SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPPORT FOR MENTORING NEW PRINCIPALS



Only **40%** of new principals surveyed reported that their school districts assign a mentor to new administrators. However, **85%** responded that they wish a mentor was a resource provided by the district.



New principals identified the characteristics they seek when selecting a mentor. Experience in the principal role is the most highly sought quality.



TOP 3 SCHOOL CHALLENGE AREAS WHERE A MENTOR'S SUPPORT WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL

- ★ Student discipline and behavior - **45%**
- ★ Teacher quality issues - **38%**
- ★ Closing the student academic achievement gap - **30%**

TOP 3 PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGE AREAS WHERE A MENTOR'S SUPPORT WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL

- ★ Being an effective instructional leader - **66%**
- ★ Growing professional skills - **50%**
- ★ Managing time/setting priorities - **43%**

Other areas where a mentor's guidance would prove useful include navigating school boards, day to day operations management, attendance, building a strong school culture, and parent concerns.



NATIONAL PANELISTS SHARED WHO HAS INFLUENCED THEM THE MOST AS NEW PRINCIPALS.

- My colleagues and friends who have been or are currently veteran principals. Only principals know the experience of being a principal. If you haven't served in the role, you can't possibly understand.
- It takes a village...I go to different "mentors" for different issues. The most important thing is being able to talk through specific situations with someone I trust.
- Other principals I respect and district leaders who keep the best interest of students first.
- My staff. Their feedback is invaluable.
- Other administrators I have worked with in my career.
- District leadership and support staff.

- Educational leaders from Twitter.
- My colleagues who are in the same boat as I am - the "newbies" as we muddle through things together.
- My mentor.
- I have wonderful colleagues that have each influenced me in some way. We work very well together as an elementary admin team, and I feel very fortunate to be able to seek advice from these 3 individuals.
- My college professors in my doctoral classes.
- The students in my building.



New principals recommended their top 3 books for mentoring new administrators.

- *Transforming School Culture - How to Overcome Staff Division* by Anthony Muhammad
- *Hacking School Discipline: 9 Ways to Create a Culture of Empathy and Responsibility Using Restorative Justice* by Nathan Maynard & Brad Weinstein
- *You're the Principal! Now What? Strategies and Solutions for New School Leaders* by Jen Schwanke
- *The Principal* by Michael Fullan
- *Fearless Conversations School Leaders Have to Have: Step Out of Your Comfort Zone and Really Help Kids* by Irving C. Jones Sr. & Vera J. Blake
- *The Mindful School Leader: Practices to Transform Your Leadership and School* by Valerie Brown & Kristen Olson
- *Dare to Lead* by Brene Brown
- *Culturize: Every Student. Every Day. Whatever it Takes.* by Jimmy Casas
- *Becoming a School Principal: Learning to Lead, Leading to Learn* by Sarah E. Fiarman
- *Instructional Rounds in Education: A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning* by Elizabeth A. City, Richard F. Elmore, Sarah E. Fiarman & Lee Teitel
- *Relentless: Changing Lives by Disrupting the Educational Norm* by Hamish Brewer
- *What Great Principals Do Differently: 18 Things that Matter Most* by Todd Whitaker
- *Lead Like a Pirate: Make School Amazing for Your Students and Staff* by Shelley Burgess & Beth Houf
- *The Tough Kid Principal's Briefcase* by William R. Jenson, Ginger Rhode, Cal Evans & Daniel Morgan
- *What School Could Be* by Ted Dintersmith

- *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High* by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan & Al Switzler
- *The Principal's Guide to the First 100 Days of the School Year: Creating Instructional Momentum* by Shawn Joseph
- *Leaders of Their Own Learning: Transforming Schools Through Student-Engaged Assessment* by Ron Berger, Leah Rugen & Libby Woodfin
- *Essential Truths for Principals* by Danny Steele & Todd Whitaker
- *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* by Stephen R. Covey
- *If You Don't Feed the Teachers They Eat the Students! Guide to Success for Administrators and Teachers* by Neila A. Connors

New principals identified these articles and resources as the most impactful as they've begun their principalship:

- All articles in Principal magazine by NAESP and ASCD Educational leadership because they are timely and informative.
- Twitter has been a great resource - by following authors, other leaders, and principals. Also getting involved in PLNs and chats.
- NAESP's Principal Insights e-newsletter
- Marshall Memo
- Harvard Business Review premium online and in-print subscription. Very helpful, daily resources including presentations, videos, podcasts, articles, and more.
- The Main Idea - it is a site that summarizes some of the best books for educators and leaders.
- Podcasts - Transformative Principal, Better Leaders Better Schools, School Leadership Reimagined.
- All of Principal Baruti Kafele's YouTube videos and books.
- Principal Principles Facebook group.
- Education Weekly provides nice, short articles on current issues.

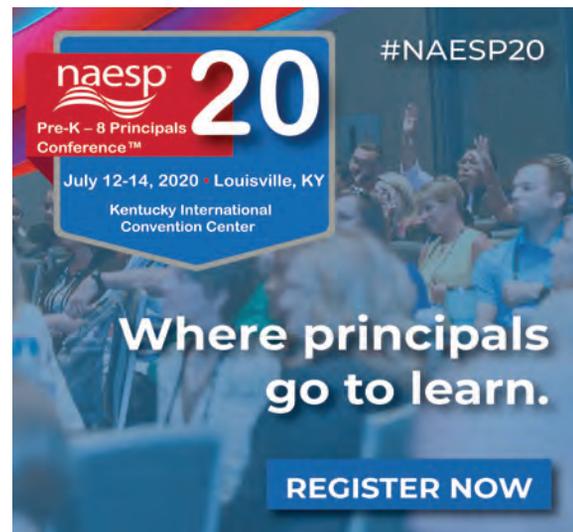


What is the most important lesson or piece of advice new principals have learned from their mentor this year?

- Lean on others for advice, wisdom, etc. Don't try to do it all yourself. Take a breath and reflect before making big decisions. Listen, listen, listen.
- Cognitive coaching. Vice principals are "task masters" who are very efficient and help run the school, but a true principal, who mentors others as well, transforms the VP role for her mentees and coaches them through the profession.
- Always remember you are dealing with people. How you make them feel is the most important thing.
- Time management and productivity are not the same thing. Use tools that really make the latter possible.
- When in doubt, think like a teacher.
- Do not evaluate your success based only on the failures. Look at all the work you have done.
- Always make decisions in the best interest of the students.
- Look for positives each day because they are there, even on the hardest days.

What do new principals know now that they wish they knew at the start of their principalship?

- Technical things like managing calendars, to-do lists, e-mail.
- What to ask for in terms of tools and supports.
- How much work it takes to improve academic achievement for students.
- The importance of fostering and prioritizing relationships with parents.
- Not everything/everyone needs an answer right away.
- More practice with those hard conversations. It's hard as a principal to not feel like you have a place you can practice those conversations and be vulnerable in a place that is safe.
- Communication is key to everything. Never assume anything. Communicate it anyway just in case.
- Act confident even if you don't feel confident.
- That it is much harder than expected! Even with extensive AP experience, you are never truly prepared for the weight you carry as the principal.



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.