


NAVIGATING THE TRANSITION FROM LEADER TO SCHOOL LEADER




Ontario Principals' Council
Est. 1998

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► Start your list

- I'm up to speed with...
- I know about this, but would love further training in...
- I need to know about these areas...
- Help!!! 😊



WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW?

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LET'S TALK ABOUT...

- ✓ Transitioning to the Role of P/VP
- ✓ The Power of Relationships
- ✓ The Impact of Your Leadership Style
- ✓ Your Entry Plan & Problem-solving




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THE ROLE OF P/VP AND THE CHALLENGE OF TRANSITION

MOVING FROM PEER → DIRECT SUPERVISOR

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MOVING FROM PEER  DIRECT SUPERVISOR

Potential Pitfalls to Consider:

- This is one of the hardest shifts
- Former peers now report to you
- You evaluate teachers with whom you once collaborated
- Boundaries must change
- Relationships shift from collegial to supervisory

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THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL AND VICE-PRINCIPAL



You are building a team within your school with the intent of building student success through meeting the needs of ALL students.

Working with students, staff, parents and community members, remember:


You are a coach always, a mentor when possible, and a supervisor when necessary.

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EMPLOYER & EMPLOYEE – P/VPS AS AGENTS OF THE BOARD

Principal and The Employer - The Board

- The principal's role as "**agent of the Board**", the representative of the board at the school site, dictates how the principal carries out certain functions as described in Board policy and procedure.
- The principal is also expected to follow the direction of the Senior Administration, usually as communicated by the supervisory officer.
- While the principal is understood to have training and expertise in carrying out their duties, **they do not do so in their absolute discretion**. Some of these duties include such elements as employee performance appraisal, administering the collective agreements from the board's perspective, and imposing student discipline.




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MAKING THE TRANSITION FROM TEACHER LEADER TO SCHOOL LEADER


KEY ASPECTS:

- MINDSET SHIFT
- PREPARATION AND CERTIFICATION
- LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES
- BUILDING TRUST
- KEY RESPONSIBILITIES
- SUPPORT SYSTEMS



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WHAT CHANGES? (BESIDES EVERYTHING!)



Teacher responsibilities:


- Teaching and supervision of students in their teaching assignment and their success
- Communicating with students' families
- Implementing and assessing appropriate grade level curriculum
- Building a strong classroom culture and environment

Principal/Vice-principal responsibilities

- Supervision of all school students
- Supervision of all school staff
- School culture and climate
- Liaison between board, Ministry and staff, students and the school community
- Budget, staffing, safety, compliance, communications, and community relations

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THINGS TO CONSIDER...



- In many instances, you are moving from being a peer (doer) to a direct supervisor (supporter). It's important to consider:
 - The necessity of setting expectations
 - Building trust through open communication and transparency
 - Setting clear boundaries
 - Clarifying direction on confidentiality.
- You may encounter awkwardness, jealousy of role, or someone's unclear definition of the change in your role. Maintaining your perspective and understanding for those who are also dealing with the change will help to build your credibility.

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HOW TO MOVE FORWARD...



Reframe your role from "my classroom" to "our school".

- From direct instruction → instructional leadership
- From managing students → leading adults
- From autonomy → shared decision-making

Reflect on your strengths/areas for growth – use them in forming your leadership style.

Develop an entry plan.

- Create a plan which focuses on your pre-entry to the school, your first 30-60-90 days, and assessment at regular intervals.
- Be sure to establish communication, be visible, and build your team from the start.

Be consistent in your approach. Establish credibility early.

- Get to know your staff. Learn what they know and believe about the students and school community.
- Acknowledge that you are also a learner (moving from Peer to Supervisor).
- Meet with your Principal or SO to establish priorities and make a communication plan.

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AND HOW ARE YOU? - P/VP WELL-BEING

"Principal well-being has a strong correlation with school well-being. Chances are, if the principal is well, they are making choices that create a positive environment for their staff, students and community.

The well-being of principals is crucial not only for the staff and students, but also for the academic and social performance of students and the overall success of the school. Positive well-being is associated with constructive leadership, while negative well-being is associated with a destructive leadership style."

"The Principal Effect: The Role of School Leaders in Thriving Schools"
-by Carol Sarich with the EdCan Network, May 27, 2024

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YOUR STYLE OF LEADERSHIP?

IN AN INSTAGRAM POST, A TEACHER ONCE ASKED OTHERS TO DESCRIBE IN ONE WORD WHAT THEY LOOKED FOR IN A GREAT LEADER /PRINCIPAL. WITHIN AN HOUR, THERE WERE OVER 600 RESPONSES. WHICH WERE THE TOP 5 CHARACTERISTICS WHICH RANKED HIGHEST?

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YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE

- Empathetic
- Consistency
- Integrity
- Communicator
- Reliability
- relationships

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PERSONAL LEADERSHIP STYLES... A CLOSER LOOK

- Communication
- Decision-Making
- Time Management
- Bias aware
- Flexibility



- Conflict Management
- Supervision of Staff
- Stress Management
- Interpersonal Relationships

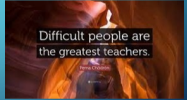
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THE IMPACT OF YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE

While it seems easy for good leaders to lead good people, it takes a great leader to lead challenging people.



The impact of your leadership is felt positively when:

- You are an equity champion.
- You navigate challenging situations
- You deal with challenge/conflict effectively and with empathy and compassion.
- You problem-solve with all in mind.



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WHAT DO YOU NEED TO MAKE YOU A GREAT PRINCIPAL/VICE-PRINCIPAL?

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RELATIONSHIPS... WHAT ARE THEY TO YOU?

- Identify critical relationships in your school, and work to establish them.
- Know your relationships. What role do you play in the partnership/relationship? *Mentor vs Coach vs Supervisor (Protector)*
- Assess strengths and areas for growth... where does the relationship work, not work?



“IF WORKING IN SCHOOLS WAS EASY, EVERYONE WOULD BE DOING IT!”

HEAD ABOVE WATER - PAGE 1

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IN YOUR LEADERSHIP JOURNEY, WHO HAS HAD THE GREATEST IMPACT IN YOUR DEVELOPMENT AS A LEADER?

WHY?

WHAT DID THEY DO THAT HAD THE MOST IMPACT ON YOU?




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LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES – SIMON SINEK

- ✓ **Start with why:** Understand the purpose behind your actions and inspire your team.
- ✓ **Create a safe environment:** Look after your people and create a healthy and safe environment
- ✓ **Lead by serving:** Put the needs of others above your own and empower those around you
- ✓ **Train your people:** Invest in relationships and help others grow
- ✓ **Act, don't react:** Be proactive and take action

Leadership First: Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don't - Simon Sinek, 2017



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START WITH COMMUNICATION – ALWAYS.

Open Communication

- Freely expressed ideas, input welcome
- Builds rapport and teams, social
- Difficult when working on a deadline

Closed Communication


- Useful for tasks which need done immediately
- Less social and more task-focused
- Doesn't invite others' ideas and opinions

How to COMMUNICATE better

1. LISTEN: don't just think about what you're going to say next
2. Be HONEST: say how you feel while being careful to aware
3. Pay attention to BODY LANGUAGE
4. Do not ASSUME: ask questions if you're uncertain
5. Be MINDFUL: give it receive. Don't let the conversation be one sided

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CHALLENGE/CONFLICT: THE CYCLE



1. Preparing yourself, your team, your school
2. Monitoring the temperature- students, classes, staff, parents, community, Board
3. Managing conflict- once it starts, how do you deal with it?
4. Recovering afterward- health & well-being, restoring trust, strengthening relationships

**** System Support—when it feels unsafe and unhealthy before, during and after conflict**

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REMEMBER: BUILD TRUST AND MAINTAIN IT.


- Be consistent and transparent in your expectations, words and actions.
- Be clear with your role, goals and responsibilities.
- Communicate effectively and respectfully.
- Listen actively, ask open-ended questions, invite input, be supportive, and demonstrate appreciation.
- Empower others by trusting them to do their jobs.
- Seek feedback and acknowledge if you've made a mistake.



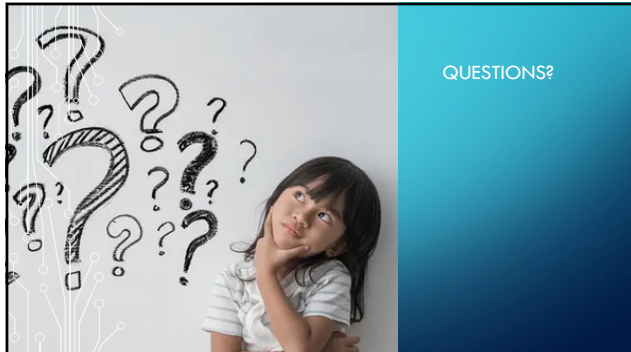
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REMEMBER: BE PROACTIVE!

- Spend the time upfront!
- Build a collaborative culture and productive relationships.
- Frame your school culture around student needs as the focus.
- Be positive and supportive.
- Always remember... you are a coach always, a mentor when possible, and a supervisor when necessary.



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QUESTIONS?

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A corkboard with the word "RESOURCES" spelled out in colorful, block letters. Each letter is on a separate card with a pushpin. The letters are: R (blue), E (green), S (yellow), O (red), U (white), R (green), E (yellow), S (black). The corkboard is set against a blue background with circuit-like patterns.

RESOURCES

What you should know:

- Federal Legislation
- Provincial Legislation
- Regulations/Ministry Directives (PPMs)
 - Duties of a Principal and Vice-Principal
 - Duties of a Teacher
- Board Documents – Policies and Procedures
- Board Protocols/Guidelines
- Collective Agreements
- Professional Resources
 - Tip Sheets
 - Register
 - Articles
 - Webinars, Workshops, Courses
- Health & Safety Resources (eg. OSBIE)

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