

WELLNESS:

MORE THAN A LUNCH BREAK



How Personal Intelligence Can Keep You and Your School Truly Well

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA
Creating a Culture, Managing Resources

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As you start off this school year, it's time to embrace the challenge of a new year with renewed determination, enthusiasm, and hope!

In the fall, it's typical for leaders to recommit to good habits: packing and actually eating lunch, drinking lots of water, putting ourselves first, and having positive energy to tackle challenges (some new and some old!). We've all made these commitments to ourselves. The back-to-school routine is solid for about the first three weeks and then "life of the principal" hits you like a ton of bricks. Little things crop up that begin to derail these positive efforts. You find yourself falling back into less than helpful old habits and end up putting everyone else's needs before your own. Does this cycle sound familiar?

AWSP's "School Leader Paradigm: Becoming While Doing" is an amazing resource. If you haven't explored it yet, I highly encourage you to do so! It details the personal, social, and systems intelligences and how "who



we are" influences "what we do" as leaders in our buildings. In particular, the *becoming* side of the paradigm can greatly help the building leader reflect and create a game plan for a healthy start to the school year (the *doing* side of the paradigm) — specifically, the personal intelligences we bring to the school house!

PERSONAL INTELLIGENCE

Our Personal Intelligence is made up of four competencies: wellness, growth mindset, self-management, and innovation. Each of these competencies has four key attributes which paint a richer picture of what

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it means to actually be well, growth-minded, self-managed, and innovative in our leadership roles. In planning for the upcoming school year, I chose to do a deeper dive into this particular intelligence, looking for new ideas and growth opportunities for myself as a school leader. Each of the competencies had nuggets I felt were important to consider and work into the back to school routine.

OPTIMISTIC:

Did you know being optimistic is actually an attribute of leadership that can make a positive difference? Let's face it... the role of principal is THE best job in the business, but it doesn't come without its fair share of challenges. How optimistic are YOU? Do you believe adversity is something that can be overcome? Are you looking for the positive in difficult situations? I am not advocating for you to live a leadership life viewed through rose-colored glasses — but there is value in looking for the positives in your day-to-day leadership life.

REFLECTIVE:

How often do you take 5-10 minutes to just reflect on your accomplishments? Have you ever made a list of students who you know you've positively impacted? Typically, we dwell on the meeting that didn't go the way we intended, or the instance where we lost our patience with a student or colleague. The negative examples are always the easiest to hang onto. However, tremendous growth comes from taking a deep breath and reflecting intentionally on how to recover from challenging experiences. Take the time to celebrate and reflect on *all* the positives happenings during the day.

SELF-CONFIDENT:

Do you ever lay awake at night worrying? Worrying about things

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you really have no control over or things that might not ever happen? The role of the principal is *hugely* laden with responsibility. You cannot plan for everything, but you can stand tall, put a confident smile on your face, and realize you are the leader your school needs today. We will never be one hundred percent prepared for everything coming our way on any given day. I encourage you to embrace your strengths *and* weaknesses and to seek out opportunities to learn new skills to grow in your deficit areas. Nothing shows confidence like building capacity in the work of leadership, listening to ideas of others, and celebrating the efforts of the team.

COURAGEOUS:

How difficult is it to be courageous in the role of principal? Have you ever worried if you had the courage to do this job — the one with new initiatives, new state rules around discipline, and new best practices that aren't widely understood or accepted *yet*? Courageous leaders show up. We take chances after thoughtful consideration. We make bold moves to support our staff and students. We advocate for those without a voice, and sometimes it's scary. Some days end victoriously — those are the best. “Lean Forward Into Your Life” author Mary Anne Radmacher sums it up best: “Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, I'll try again tomorrow.”

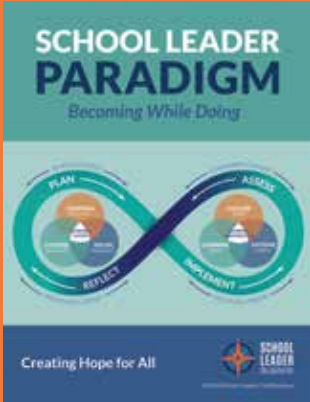
TAKE INVENTORY

How can a focus on the personal intelligences support your start to an amazing year?

Consider taking a personal inventory of your optimism for the role — what can you do to keep up the hope required to lead with positivity? Reflective practices help us to be more growth-minded and keep up the determination to persist despite challenges. Our staff and students will take cues from us. Are you modeling the self-confidence in yourself and others to stay the course or take appropriate risks?

All students deserve courageous leaders in their schools. Are you modeling courageous leadership in your interactions with students, staff, and families? No doubt about it — you were hired to lead the school you are in because you possess the skills and talents to make a difference.

Best wishes for an amazing school year and for starting and staying strong all year long! ■



Want to take a deeper look at AWSP's new publication, "The School Leader Paradigm: Becoming While Doing"? Learn more about it at and order your own copy at www.awsp.org/paradigm