

Advice to Interns from Principals Just Completing Their First Year

What do you wish you would have had experienced, or at least been exposed to, during your internship?

Principal A:

- *More practice watching a principal lead an instructional coaching round with a teacher (pre, observation, post)
- *Calendaring the year; schedule time into every day for classrooms
- *How to write an effective evaluation – evidence and proof, and improvement plan.
- *Leading professional development for staff.

Principal B:

- *The volume of paperwork, emails, and staff/student/parent operational interruptions that take you off course and away from the priority of instructional leader.
- *Opportunity to job shadow (learning walks) with more secondary principals (outside of my home district).
- *Extensive exposure to TPEP.....instructional models, evaluation process; opportunities to calibrate.
- *Working with office staff.
- *More work with SPED (resource room, life skills, autism).

Principal C:

- *Time management/prioritizing tasks and duties; communications.
- *Developing state mandated testing schedules: considerations, ripple effects, best practices.
- *Opportunities to visit other schools, school districts.
- *Various models/discussions of WCAL (site based) leadership team.
- *Coaching of staff (language/various models).
- *Vision “casting”.

Principal D:

- *Personnel issues
- *Budgeting
- *Common core
- *TPEP; evaluations and calibration.
- *Time management.
- *Building trust/relationships in a “broken” school.
- *Grant writing.
- *Writing staff and/or student handbooks.
- *Learn about the traditions of the school/community.
- *How to have those hard conversations with staff.
- *Exposure to all areas; elementary, middle, and high.

Principal E:

- *Working on discipline issues.
- *Practice with prioritizing and multitasking.
- *Conversations with teachers regarding observations and evaluations.
- *Need tons of practical hands on experiences.

Principal F:

- *More focus on special education.

- *More training on time management tips (email, etc.).
- *More training on new case law surrounding school issues and the latest court cases.
- *Disciplining students.
- *More practice evaluating teachers and how to have effective conversations with them during the post-observation.
- *More training on emergency planning and school safety plans.
- *Calibration of teacher evaluations.

Principal G:

- *Time management.
- *More discipline processing experience.
- *Conducting observations and writing observation reports.
- *More mentoring by my mentor principal.
- *More guidance on how much time I should devote to: Athletic supervision, classroom visits/walk throughs, before and after school supervision.
- *Building initiatives and vision casting.
- *More post-observation and end of year evaluation conferences with mentor principal.

Principal H:

- *Information on staffing and the considerations to be made.
- *Information on managing school budgets.
- *Critical benchmarks of the school year to be notified of:
 - placing the first staff learning improvement day
 - curriculum night
 - Parent/teacher conferences
 - budget deadlines
 - recess vote – how best to present/discuss
 - MSP placing and implementation
 - parameters for building next year's master schedule
- *Sit in on 504 IEP meeting to understand system processes and procedures.
- *Learn how to delegate/work with office staff.

Principal I:

- *Working with CPS or other state agencies.
- *More evaluations of staff – both certificated and classified.
- *Working with a secretary – how that works,-what works well.

Principal J:

- *Budget.
- *More writing evaluations.
- *Conduct more parent issue meetings; instead of watching the principal handle issues, have the principal watch you.
- *Time management.
- *Run more staff meetings.
- *Learn how to manage an office staff.

Principal K:

- *Time management, handling a day, paperwork.
- *Dealing with difficult people: parents, students, staff
- *Budget: real numbers and budget cuts.
- *Special Ed meetings, IEP's, laws.

Principal L:

- *My internship was pretty comprehensive, I was lucky to have a “Dean” position.
- *More time on teacher evaluation – but I can understand the problems there.
- *Budget (financial can be pretty intimidating).
- *Working with parents.

Principal M:

- *Dealing with “mad mothers”, parent interactions/connections.
- *Time management/scheduling; yearlong calendar.
- *Evaluation/best practice.
- *Leadership – building teams; RTI, PLC teams

Principal N:

- *I wish I had more experience dealing with the central office staff and personalities.

Principal O:

- *Learning how to manage an office staff, effectively use my administrative assistant.
- *Scheduling of paras.
- *Proactive managing a building budget.

Principal P:

- *Exposure to different school districts.
- *Building/structural issues – what’s my role?
- *How important parent communication is (not newsletters).

Principal Q:

- *More writing of observations.
- *Discipline issues (the hard ones!)
- *Teacher evaluations.
- *Discipline staff members.
- *Social networking (good & bad).
- *Time management.
- *Info about unions.
- *SPED students.

Principal R:

- *Master scheduling (building a master schedule).
- *Time management.
- *Disciplining staff.
- *Observation look for.
- *Budgeting and management of budgets.

Principal S:

- *Discipline issues: hardcore – drugs, weapons, gang.
- *Personnel issues: the hard conversations and how to deal with difficult staff.
- *Evaluations.
- *School Budget.

Principal T:

- *Time management.
- *Personnel issues.
- *Observing and evaluating staff.
- *Staff discipline/union issues.
- *More time with mentor – processing my experience.
- *Critical conversations.
- *Budget management.

What could you have done less of?**Principal A:**

- *Meaningless tasks that did not impact student learning.

Principal B:

- *Student supervision, night event supervision; sometimes it felt like I was a “pledge” trying to earn my way in to a fraternity, having to do the garbage work no one else wanted to do.

Principal C:

- *Less supervision (evening) opportunities

Principal D:

- *Meetings actually ☺ I wish I had utilized some of my meeting times better.
- *Supervision.

Principal F:

- *Lunch duty.
- *Emails.
- *Supervision of athletic contests.

Principal G:

- *Lunch supervision.
- *Operational tasks – revising comment codes on progress reports.
- *More shared observations/evaluations
- *More weekly meeting with principal and assistant principal.

Principal H:

- *Lunch/bus duty.
- *Time spent with ASB details.

Principal K:

- *Supervision.

Principal L:

- *It's easy to load up on discipline – but there is more to the job than that. However, the experiences were very valuable.
- *Lunch/bus supervision.

Principal M:

- *Busy work/paperwork.

Principal N:

*Listening to whiney and needy staff members over and over again on the same topics that dealt more with central office issues than school issues. Next time I will tell them to go to the central office.

Principal O:

*Paperwork!! Admatch, time sheets, filing, emails.

Principal P:

*Discipline

*IEP meetings.

Principal Q:

*Supervision of sporting events.

*Lunch duty.

*Calling for subs.

*Making too many power points

*IEP meetings – RTI meeting; too many schedules.

Principal S:

*Lunch/game supervision.

Principal T:

*Supervision: sports, dances, lunch.

What other “pearls of wisdom” do you have to offer candidates in their internship year?**Principal A:**

*Learn time management early.

*Project yourself as a leader and learner.

*Be confidential.

Principal B:

*Be flexible; you can never plan for everything that will hit in a day, week, month, year; be open to shifting direction mid-year.

*As an AP you serve at the pleasure of your Supt., principal, staff and students. (Service to others is the attitude).

*Very few items are an emergency; take time to process and check with the experts.

Principal C:

*Communication, communication, communication.

*Prioritize/coordination/planning.

*Open minded/flexible/do not need to be a ‘winner’.

*Clear communications/expectations/vision shared with all.

*Learn to listen.

*Be positive at all times.

*Read your CBA’s and power people.

*Ask questions.

Principal D:

- *Keep a log throughout the year. Include what went well, what needs to be tweaked/trashed, due dates, etc.
- *Know bargaining agreements.
- *Create/build teacher leaders.
- *Ask questions.

Principal E:

*Discouragement will happen – but it won't kill you. Keep your head up, do what is right, do it with integrity. You will find a job, but you must be patient.

Principal F:

*Create efficient systems for filing, emails, phone calls, etc. that will allow you to free up time to get into the classrooms. Don't get caught sitting in the office all day doing office work.

Principal H:

- *Hold regular meetings (weekly, twice/month) and keep them no matter how busy you are.
- *Do more shared observations/evaluations with willing teachers to get practice and calibrate responses to observed behaviors and practices.

Principal I:

- *Have fun.
- *Remember teachers are not your enemies – they are your greatest asset!
- *Listen, listen, listen.
- *If you say it.....do it!
- *Don't criticize support!

Principal J:

- *Walk into the school acting like it is the best day ever.
- *Make sure you are fully taking over the responsibilities of the principal. You won't completely understand the entire job unless you do the entire job.
- *Ask for help anytime and don't be afraid to admit you don't have all the answers.

Principal K:

- *Learn to listen, document everything, and stay positive!
- *There is a lot of gray! Make a decision.
- *Always ask questions.

Principal L:

- *Once you are in administration, you will see a very different side of teachers – friendly, decent colleagues aren't always effective teachers.
- *Understand that it's ok to not have an answer to a tough question – asking for help is not a sign of weakness.

Principal M:

- *Enjoy!
- *Make a difference!
- *Listen.
- *Stay positive.