

Finish **STRONG!**

The principalship is both a marathon and a sprint. The key is pacing yourself.

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PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture



The intensity of spring and all its beauty is alive and well in our state. This is especially noticeable if you are an administrator working in one of Washington's public schools.

This time of year for a school administrator, is even more intense as there is much to accomplish before the end of the school year: state testing, teacher evaluation, hiring of new staff, spring sports, volunteer appreciation festivities, livestock shows and multiple graduation ceremonies. How does the busy principal, wearing many hats in rural districts throughout Eastern Washington, make it from spring break to June 15?

“ We plan to start our year strong and then ‘life happens.’ Are you planning to finish strong?”

If you find yourself gearing up for spring and feeling already behind or exhausted, read on for some ideas and reminders that might come in handy.

HAVING A PLAN

Brainstorm the list of to do's. It all seems overwhelming, but if you can make a master list, break it down into small chunks, you'll have the opportunity to organize the work into manageable parts. Once your list is complete, separate the tasks into the following quadrants:

Easy: High	Hard: High
Easy: Low	Hard: Low

The left hand column, allows you to identify the tasks that are easier to accomplish and have a lower or high payoff. The right hand column, allows you to identify tasks that are more challenging to accomplish, and have different payoffs. (Hint: avoid the Hard:Low quadrant if at all possible!) This tool is to help you organize your tasks and to ask for help in keeping you on track.

BACKWARDS MAP

You've now created a to-do list that probably seems a little overwhelming. Take a deep breath and start putting things into the calendar, assigning some soft due dates for yourself. Just getting things on the calendar will help you to stay focused. Not to mention each week as you complete things on your list—keep track of

your progress. Nothing breeds success like success! Build in time to reflect daily and move things forward if for some reason you were not able to accomplish a task you assigned yourself. Tomorrow is a new day!

ASK FOR HELP

In principal training, we are rarely taught how to work with and use our administrative assistant to help keep us on track of our work. The administrative assistants wears many hats, but their primary task is to help YOU to be successful. Plan to meet regularly (weekly) with your secretary to insure you are keeping up on your plan and staying on track. The administrative assistant can be an amazing ally to fending off distractions and allowing you to stay on target with your spring work plan.

STAYING HEALTHY

Nothing kills a well thought-out plan like getting sick. Are you eating breakfast each morning? Drinking water? How about ensuring that you take the time (yes, I said it!) to eat lunch? How about exercising or at least insuring you get outside to breathe fresh air each day? (Walking to and from your car doesn't count!).

We plan to start our year strong and then “life happens.” Are you planning to finish strong? Taking care of you is very important and at this time of year —not something you can take for granted. Ready or not, June 15 will be here before you know it. Staying healthy, having a plan, relying on key team members to help keep you focused, you'll find yourself at summer's door in no time! ■