

Book Review

Title of Book:	The New Principal's field book strategies for success
Author:	Pam Robbins and Harvey Alvy
Year of Publication:	2004
Publishing Agency:	Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
City:	Alexandria, Virginia, USA
Reviewers:	Amjad Ali Rind, Masood Ahmed Dool, Aakash Kumar Chawla

The book *The New Principal's Field Book Strategies for Success* (2012, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Publishing), edited by Pam Robbins and Alvy (2004), has been published by ASCD. The list price of the book is \$29.95. This book consists of 15 chapters, in which nine critical themes have been discussed. The authors have shared the real-life experiences of primary, elementary and secondary school principals regarding the headship of schools. Although there exists plethora of books on leadership, yet this book highlights the stories of success and failure of principals. In addition, the authors have provided empirical evidences of the principals who met with the twists and turns during their principalship period.

The first three chapters of this book serve as a guide for the newcomers, who aspire to become principals in schools, because every single day new principals come across surprises, obstacles and opportunities. The school principals encounter many challenges each day. This book prepares them for dealing with various challenges. Principals are expected to take on-the-spot decisions and make strategies to cope up with the problems that occur in day today dealings in schools. The quick decisions they take determine the success and failure of the principals. The focus of this book is to highlight the issues and challenges that principals have encountered in their schools. It provides research-based evidences and strategies to the new principals to thrive as successful heads of schools from the day one of their headship.

Moreover, these chapters also give comprehensive knowledge on the real experiences of principals. This book not only prepares new principals to face challenges but also provides them the strategies to avail the opportunities since the start of leadership role. It enables the new principals to develop their capabilities and skills to thrive as new school leader. It has been mentioned in the book that the success in principals'

career is influenced by the habits acquired by new principals in their early years of career. This book not only provides clear, concise practical information but also effective strategies to new principals who aspire to be visionary leaders of their schools. In addition, the new principals could work skillfully to strengthen the relationship with the teachers, students and community. He/she promotes collaborative and positive school culture in his/her school context.

The fourth chapter talks about the importance of creating professional communities in institutes. The authors emphasize that professional communities in the institutes make journey progressive and productive. In this chapter, the writer raises a very essential point with the help of the narration of quote by Michael Fullan that, effectiveness of a leader can be assessed and analyzed from the people to whom he/she leaves in the institute. The writers further elaborate the term professional communities that professional community means collaboration among administrators and teachers in pursuit of excellence, focusing on how students' learning can be enhanced.

The fifth chapter throws the light on instructional, curricular and assessment leadership. Where writer highlights a very important thing that most of the school leaders focus on students learning but it should not be forgotten that success of students is directly proportional to effective teachers. If school principals want their students grow and develop then they must want the same for teachers. On the very first day of their job, instructional leaders should send the message to the staff for instructional support to raise the standards of teachers.

In the next chapters, the authors highlight important legal content and instructions that can help new principals deal with the legal problems they will face. These include desegregation, gender equity, serving students with disabilities, serving students with limited English proficiency, security, negligence, and child abuse problems, free speech and censorship, problems related to the process of and search and seizure of laws, threats, harassment, and bullying, legal problems after 9/11. Regarding work with unions, co-operation and cooperation among the different stakeholders in school is the only way we are going to be successful.

Writers say that school executives and unions should work together to achieve success for all students. An opposite relationship is expensive to all sides; all the goals will be directed to the improvement of student achievement. Trade unions and school executives should work together to provide a first-class education for all students. At school, where a strong sense of society exists, students are more likely to be theoretically motivated. If students perceive that the environment is physically, psychologically, socially, and emotionally safe, they will be able to focus on learning.

Another way that feelings affect students' learning in the school, in a community, and in their home stems from how it is hugged with others. Change begins with faith; and a valuable understanding for Principals regarding the change process has to do with the individuals' concerns that an innovation tends to differ but evolves into a fairly predictable.

This book also makes readers realize that successful principals are essential for large-scale, sustained and successful school changes. As a moral leader and part of a team, the principal must support a school culture of emotional security that fosters student rights and duties in a democratic position. The historical heritage commissions suggested that all students are entitled to social opportunity regardless of national origin, race, religion, economic situation, language, or gender. Students protect their rights by taking full responsibility for their actions. They will care for the individual rights of others and help to provide a safe and positive school environment within which to study.

The authors suggest that new principals need to be precautionary with the new and veteran teachers, build relationships and let them know before the school year begins that everyone has to work together to create a caring school culture. Principals need to work on the heart products before the mechanism. The key to cutting down bullying can be to address the general climate in school. New school principals should recognize a school counseling program as an integral part of the student service program. New principals should expect counselors to be advocates for students and review the advocacy as opposed to a principal responsibility. Not only this, but a crisis management plan should be developed to deal with the school crisis. The research on successful school and individual student performance often involves parent participation as a major contributing factor. Families as stakeholders can participate in school six different ways including parenting, communication, volunteers, learning at home, decision making, and partnership with the community.

The last four chapters (12 to 15) share that for the sake of students and school, successful leaders involve the community as much as possible. Most important part of community, parents can be involved into six ways; parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community. While keeping the quote "People don't care what you know, until they know what you care in mind". Head teachers along with the staff must care parents, have a positive thing to say about every child and while communicating with parents, educational jargons must not be used. This kind of environment helps in crisis management as well as leads to preventive expertise.

Media, being a major source of publicity, both positive as well as negative, should be involved in school programs and dealt carefully. A competent principal always builds and keeps honest, trusting and personal relations with media, to cope with any problem at any time. While sharing a

story with media, three things must be kept in mind, local interest, widespread appeal and a local angle to a national story. Every worth sharing activity, national days, result announcement functions etc., may be shared with photographic evidences or videos to make the school well known.

How to enjoy personal life along with being an effective educational leader? Schedule time for yourself on your calendar. Never forget or postpone the things like physical exercise, eating and sleeping well and awareness of current issues. At least once a week take out time for professional reading and learning and own hobbies. Never forget to pass time with family, staff, students, wherever and whenever it is possible. Set a personal example for others, so that all may accompany you at their own will.

A leader must also know own self, along with his vision and mission. The Indian leader, Gandhi knew his mission of truth and nonviolence so is known throughout the world. Never forget or avoid celebrating what is best for learners and facilitators. Communicate, as asking leads to success.

Finally, this book concludes that leadership solely consists of human relations. In educational scenario, it can be achieved by promoting teacher leadership, maintaining a personal vision of teaching and learning. An educational leader must also help all to be what they can be. The authors of the book guided the readers through very essential concepts and practices which include data driven decision making, crisis intervention, instructional leadership, professional development and time management. Moreover, the readers were invited by the writers at the end of each chapter to critically reflect on their new knowledge and apply it to novel situations of real life. This book has covered everything from every day management tasks to the broader goals of student's success. The most importantly, the book leaves a message that, treat others the way, you want to be treated. The new principal's field book suggests that educational leaders should keep the lights working, take care of their health, and keep learning and refining their practices.

References

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