



ROLE OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AS A LEADER FOR MAXIMIZING LEARNING PROCESS

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ABSTRACT :

The principal play the most significant role in promoting the learning and success of all students. The role of the principal is the key to a school's ability to fulfill the requirements of the teachers and for the successful teaching learning environment. Principals in today's schools are such persons who are in the position to carry out a innumerable functions a's well a's act in a variety of divergent roles. In this article, the investigator discusses what should be the role of a school principal a's a leader and how a principal can maximize learning. The review of the evidence suggests that successful leadership can play a highly significant role in improving student learning. In this article we point out the areas where principals have the opportunity to have a significant impact on maximizing learning and how he can achieve this goal by his excellent leadership quality by changing the focus of instruction from teaching to learning; constructing co-operative structures and processes for teachers to work together for the improvement of the instruction; and make sure that learning progress is ongoing and concentrated toward school objectives. Based on the research reviews the investigator have suggested six focused area: (1) Focusing on learning, (2) Motivating collaboration, (3) Using data for enhancing learning, (4) Providing support, and (5) Orienting curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The article suggests that what should be the role of a school principal a's an institutional leader and how he can maximize learning process with his excellent leadership quality. This article helps to identify the area in which a school principal can encourage the teaching learning environment in most effective and productive way to maximize learning process. A good leadership of a school principal is always looking to upgrade their school and then figures out how to make those improvements no matter whatever will be the difficulties.

KEYWORDS : School Principal, Leader, Learning Process.

INTRODUCTION

In the past few years the volumes of high quality research has confirmed that the renowned schools do not exist apart from great leaders. More importantly, recent research by the Wallace Foundation and other groups has brought into focus the functions and priorities of effective principals and the significant impact of principal leadership on student learning. Now-a-day the heightened expectations in educational field, the principals are more responsible for improving teaching and learning. They should be educational visionaries, inspired and creative; instructional and curriculum leaders; assessment specialist; disciplinarians; community constructor; public relations resource person; budget analysts; facility managers and organizer; special program administrators; and expert team leader of legal, policy commission and enterprise.



For effective principal leadership the Indian educational policies and commissions have made

some guiding principles. But it is very challenging in putting those principles into practice in the dynamic and complex school environments. The school principal influence the implementation of those guiding principles and develop the overall quality of learning process. The positive and healthy teaching and learning environments for everyone in the school are created and maintained by the school principals, including the professional staff (Bredeson, 2006). The purpose of this article is to examine how the principals influence students’ learning and development in their schools. We describe the school principal’s roles and responsibilities in maximizing learning process.

The most important responsibility of every educator is to provide the conditions under which people’s learning curves go off the chart. Whether one is called a principal, a teacher, a professor, a foundation official, or a parent, our most vital work is promoting human learning ... and above all our own learning. (Barth,1996)

Effective School Principals and Leadership Qualities

Effective principals identify and articulate school vision and goals, influence school outcomes, student achievement, through their recruitment and motivation of quality teachers, effectively allocate the resources and develops organizational structures to support instruction and learning (Hornig, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2010). According to the Researchers the success in all these areas of influence brings about five key responsibilities:

Shaping the vision of high standard academic success for all students.
Creating a good educational environment so that safety, a cooperative spirit, and other foundations of productive and effective interaction succeed.
Encouraging leadership quality in others so that teachers and other adults understand their role in realizing and achieving the school vision.
Enabling teachers to teach at their best and students to learn to their utmost by improving the instruction.
Managing and organizing people, data and processes to strengthening school improvement.

- (Wallace Foundation, 2013)

ROLE OF SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AS A LEADER

The school principals are the most prominent and significant educational leaders, and their leadership is strictly linked to student’s learning process and achievement. The school principal must understand that how the teachers teaching quality influence the student learning and development. It is well known that the teacher’s professional development influences the teaching learning process and student’s achievement. For maximizing the learning process, principal must link professional development of teachers, teaching strategy and student achievement. Some of the researchers have identified areas in which school principals through his effective leadership can positively influence the learning environments in their schools by linking the area of teacher professional development.

The school principal a's a educational leader can plan, organize and encourage an environment in which new information and practices are keenly incorporated into the system. Demands for greater accountability for maximizing learning process, requires the principal to be instruction oriented. The focus on results; the focus on student achievement; the focus on students learning at school levels, can only happen if teaching and learning become the central focus of the school and the central focus of the principal. But the problem is how the principals can help teachers to clarify and understand the instructional objectives and work collaboratively to enhance teaching and learning to get the desired goal? Principals should help teachers in shifting their focus from teaching to what students are learning. The school’s

existence and the students' learning is focused and maintained by the instructional leaders. (Blase, & Phillips, 2010; Smylie, 2010).

Shifting the focus of instruction from teaching to learning; forming collaborative structures and processes for faculty to work together to improve instruction; and ensuring that learning development is ongoing and focused toward school goals, will require excellent leadership focused directly on learning. (Lunenburg & Irby, 2006) School principals can accomplish this by:

1. Focusing on learning
2. Motivating collaboration
3. Using data for enhancing learning
4. Providing support, and
5. Orienting curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

These five dimensions together can provide an irresistible and effective framework for achieving and supporting the learning success for all children.

1. Focusing on Learning

Principals can help the teachers in shifting the focus from teaching to learning. The principals are in a key position to pose such questions like- What do we want our students to know and be able to do? How will you know if the students are learning? How we are going to respond if students do not learn? For evaluating student progress, what criteria will we use? How the time and resources available to help students learn can be used more effectively? How the parents can be engaged in helping students to learn? How to establish systematic collaboration as the norm of the school? These are the questions principals need to pose in order to shift the focus in schools from teaching to learning. In a professional learning environment the focus should not be on what you are teaching, but it should be on what the students are learning. The changes in curriculum, instruction, and assessment - that is, changes in teaching are usually considered as a focus on student learning. The history of school reform stipulates that innovations in teaching and learning hardly stick more than a few schools and rarely persist when they do (Elmore, 2005). Principals must be insuring that teachers have those skills which can help all students perform at high levels.

2. Motivating Collaboration

One of the most important roles of the principals is to foster a collective expectation among teachers concerning student performance. Principals should eliminate teacher isolation for making the students learning a collective mission of the school.

Principals must develop such school structures and cultures that foster individual and group learning. In a supportive condition in the school helps teachers to enhance their group and individual learning, such as particularly effective leadership. If the teachers collaborate in discussion the internally and externally generated information helps the teachers to discuss and solve issues related to students learning (Smylie, 2010). If teachers are clear on the intended results of instruction, they will be more effective. They can design curriculum and share instructional strategies to achieve those outcomes, develop valid assessment strategies and they can analyze those results and work together to come up with new ideas for improving those results.

3. Using Data for enhancing Learning

There are many factors which can enhance a school's progress in achieving learning for all students. The primary factor is the availability of performance data of each student. Performance data should be based on the specific objectives and target levels in the school curriculum. Then the school will be able to identify what is taught to what is learned. What each teacher should teach should be clear by the curriculum objectives and an assessment measure, aligned with the curriculum, should indicate what students have learned. The teachers should access the longitudinal data of each student in their classroom. With the help

of such data, teachers can develop individual and small-group, education strategy to ensure mastery in the areas of weakness from previous years

The second factor is the public nature of the data of assessment system. It provides a blueprint of those areas where the teachers should develop individual education plans and strategy and school's professional development plans at the school and classroom levels. The public nature of the data makes clear about the schools quality. Data should be disaggregated by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status and disability. It helps the school community to be aware of which students are well served and which students are not well served by the school's curriculum and instruction.

The third factor is the specifically targeted assistance provided to schools that are performing at low levels and it is very difficult to find out which schools and students needed help (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008). The principals, curriculum specialists/instructional coaches, and researchers observe current practices; discuss student performance data with staff; and assist in the development and implementation of an improvement plan. When the teachers worked together and identified students who are having difficulty, then the school faces the challenge of how they are going to respond and help the students who are not learning (Murphy, 2010). When students are not learning, the principals should insure about the professional development programs in place to give additional support to teachers and intervention strategies in place to give additional support to students (Joyce & Calhoun, 2010).

4. Providing Support

For achieving students' high performance levels, the teachers must be provided with the new training programs, advance teaching tools and the support by the higher authority. Specifically, teachers should access and go through the curriculum guides, textbooks, and specific training based on the school curriculum. They also need special training on how to use assessment results and diagnose learning gaps (Downey, Steffy, & Poston, 2009). Teachers should also know how each student performed on every question on the assessment measure.

Schools should also provide additional support to students who lag behind in core subjects, either in school or after school. The school principals should supply the financial resources like acquiring materials, information, or technology. He should also manipulate schedules or release time for teachers to learn; facilitate professional networks and create an environment that supports school improvement efforts (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008).

5. Orienting Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Principals should assure that assessment of student learning must be oriented with both the school's curriculum and the teachers' instruction (English, 2000; Popham, 2010a). When those three are well formulated and executed can change the nature of teaching and learning. They can lead to more stimulating curriculum; promote discussion and collaboration among teachers within and across schools the school environment; cultivate more productive discussions among teachers and parents; and well define the stakeholders' attention on improving student achievement.

Some schools that have developed their own assessment measures and standard have also ensured that the content of the assessment must be found in the curriculum. That is, student should not be assessed on knowledge and skills that they have not been taught. Such tests cannot evaluate the quality, breadth and depth of the school's curriculum.

By constructing better assessments, we can easily improve instruction and increase student achievement as we believe that assessment drives curriculum and instruction (Popham, 2010a, 2010b).

Teachers should stimulate and encourage the critical thinking process in the classroom, during instruction, by giving assignments, even in developing for assessments, and in the content of the assessment itself. By aligning content with productive and purposeful questions in core subject areas can rescue assessment and instruction from the contemporary focus on the recollecting of insignificant authentic and historical knowledge.

CONCLUSION

For the successful and effective school and its overall performance, the instructional leadership of the principal plays the most significant role. Promoting learning and success of all students should be the primary responsibility of the school principal. School principals can achieve this goal by focusing on learning, motivating collaboration, using data for enhancing learning, providing support, and orienting curriculum, assessment, and instruction.

This article helps and suggests a school principal to develop an improvement plan to conduct their activities and observe the outcomes of the activities, which are designed to uplift student performance levels.

It suggests how a principal can shift the focus of a teacher from teaching to learning.

It helps a school principal in designing curriculum and share instructional strategies to maximize learning process by regular assessment and analysis of student learning.

It guides the principal that how professional development programs are needed to give additional support to teachers and intervention strategies are needed to give additional support to students for better teaching and learning.

It says how a principal needs to insure that the teachers have the skills to help all students perform at high levels. Principals need to ensure that assessment of student learning is aligned with both the school's curriculum and the teachers' instruction .

Thus this article summarizes what the review reveals about the role of a school principal a's a successful educational leader and focuses areas where he can implement his leadership quality for maximizing learning process.

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