

Preface to the Third Edition

Leaders aren't born, they are made—and they are made just like anything else, through hard work.

—Vincent Lombardi

This book is for school principals—both practicing and prospective—who want to bring out the best in teachers. It is intended to help them examine, rather specifically, what they can do to influence teachers and their performance. Unfortunately, the relationship between school leadership and its effects on teachers and their work has not been explored fully in the educational literature. This literature tends to be quite abstract and often misses many of the important and concrete elements that make up the everyday world of the school. The practical and prescriptive literature is not adequately informed by solid empirical research. Moreover, the simplistic recipes for effectiveness that are typically offered offend practitioners who understand full well the complex nature of school leadership, teaching, and learning. On both counts, it is hoped that this book will be a relief.

Bringing Out the Best in Teachers is based on an in-depth study of the everyday strategies that effective school principals use to influence, motivate, and empower teachers. It is written entirely from the teacher's perspective, a perspective that has largely been ignored in the administration literature. The research approach used to collect the data for this book allowed teachers to identify and describe freely, in their own words and in great detail, how effective

principals influence them and exactly how such influence affects their teaching and, more generally, their work with students.

Here you will find detailed portrayals of what effective transformational principals actually do—from the teacher’s point of view—that lead to improved teacher motivation, commitment, and innovation and enhance teachers’ abilities to achieve high academic and social goals with students. The descriptions from the teachers’ reports are presented in a straightforward and understandable way. We wrote this book on the premise that administrators have a better chance of developing meaningful ways of working with teachers if they take the opportunity to reflect critically on their leadership within the context of knowledge produced from a study of teachers’ perspectives on effective leadership.

Many physical and psychological barriers make interaction and communication between administrators and teachers difficult. Teachers are physically and psychologically isolated from administrators; their desire for autonomy increases this isolation. Principals face overwhelming demands for their time, and their formal authority is limited. Teachers, therefore, may choose to disregard school principals whose goals and strategies of influence are inconsistent with school goals and teachers’ professional norms and expectations. When teachers’ and principals’ purposes and strategies are incongruent, a climate is created that prevents them from reaping the benefits (such as elevated levels of teacher motivation and commitment) that effective leadership can have for them and, indirectly, for students.

What kinds of principal-teacher interaction do produce these benefits? The centerpiece of this book—Chapters 2 through 9—describes the strategies and related practices employed by effective principals to enhance teachers and their work with students. Principals’ goals in using the strategies and the specific consequences for teachers are fully described. Each chapter closes with a set of guidelines for the reader’s consideration.

In Chapter 1, we present a brief overview of research on the principalship and a description of the research methods employed. Chapters 2 and 3, respectively, focus on the importance of praise and how principals articulate expectations to effect changes in teacher thinking and behavior. In Chapter 4, we examine the many

ways principals involve teachers in instructional and noninstructional decisions. Chapter 5 describes how, by extending autonomy to teachers, principals are able to enhance teachers' development. Several strategies—including the use of rewards and principal support—are discussed in Chapter 6. Indirect, subtle, and yet powerful strategies—including giving advice, providing opportunities for professional development, and distributing professional literature—are explored in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 considers the consequences of employing formal authority to ensure teacher compliance. In Chapter 9, the significance of three personality characteristics (consideration, optimism, and honesty) and two strategies (modeling and visibility) are highlighted. Chapter 10, the final chapter, challenges the reader to consider the applicability of the leadership strategies discussed herein for school restructuring.

This book discusses some fine, even extraordinary, principals whose dynamic leadership has had remarkably positive effects on teachers and, we suspect, on students as well. It describes these principals as seen through the eyes of teachers. The book shows what happens when school principals work to create open, honest, and sincere relationships with teachers. Principals who have studied and used the strategies discussed in this book tell us that they were able to create school environments that focus on the social and educational welfare of students and that such schools are possible because they bring out the best in teachers.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE THIRD EDITION

In this third edition we review additional relevant published literature, including effective school-based leadership, transformational leadership, school productivity and school effects, data analysis, and adult learning. We also compare findings about effective principal leadership to standards developed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) and the Educational Leaders Constituent Council (ELCC). In so doing, it is evident how timely the study that is the basis of this book remains.