



# IMPACT

Journal

**Summer 2019**

UTAH ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

# UTAH ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

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# Impact Journal

*Impact Journal* is an open-ended theme journal published by the Utah Association of Secondary School Principals. (UASSP)  
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# Impact Journal Publication Guidelines

Impact Journal is an open-ended theme journal published by the Utah Association of Secondary School Principals (UASSP). We welcome opinion essays, interviews, program descriptions, research reports, theoretical pieces, school climate pieces, reviews of books, humor, satire, poetry, and cartoons.

Impact is published twice each year to correspond with the UASSP annual winter and summer conferences.

## Form

- Impact editors use American Psychological Association (APA) style manual.
- Manuscripts can be sent by e-mail attachment.
- Most of our articles are between 1000 and 3000 words.
- Submit a cover sheet with the manuscript. The cover sheet should include the title, author(s), each author's present position and school (if applicable), each author's academic status (if applicable), each author's mailing address, telephone, and email address.

**Submission deadlines are November 15 and April 15 of each year.**

Manuscripts will be reviewed as to content and acceptability. Authors should assume that manuscripts will be edited to conform to length and clarity.

*Send manuscripts electronically to the editor.*

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**IMPACT**  
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of Secondary **Principals**

# Letter from the Editor

Mary Rhodes, EdD  
*Editor*

Sometimes a door slams shut. It doesn't matter which side we are standing on, the shock hurts for a bit. Sometimes doors open, and it doesn't matter whether we know what's on the other side, we walk through. Sometimes we open the door.

Carl Boyington has opened a new door for himself. He is retiring from his position as the Executive Director of our organization, Utah Association of Secondary School Principals, after serving 20 years. When he walked through the door to accept the position, he climbed stairs on the other side, and he tells us about that rise in our first article. Besides the off-road adventures he discloses during the years, he has done more. He has added and sustained new levels of professional development through putting the most credible and well-known speakers before us, through ensuring our support staff encountered meaningful conferences, and through adding polish and prestige to our journal. Carl has opened new doors for all of us, and when our

moment comes to walk through that threshold, we can hope to do so with the dignity he has modeled.

Joe Jensen, David Boren, and Theron Murphy open the garden gate as they tell us how to nurture our teachers and leadership teams. Kandace Barber puts out a welcome mat for novice teachers, and she greets our newest, most fragile, and highly cherished teachers by guiding them toward multiple avenues of support. Aaron Wilson enters the passageway to the maze of administrative responsibilities and gives wisdom to wind us through the labyrinth toward coherence. Kelli Miller confronts the barriers of poor teacher-student relationships that obstruct learning, culture, and growth and gives us a map to lead conversations toward new beginnings.

The open road on our cover by Robert King is a glimpse at the entrance of the unknown because even if we have a destination, we surely cannot anticipate every surprise on the road.

You will see entrances are a favorite photographic strategy for Dave Tanner that frame perspectives for us. Carl Boyington and Jane Bradbury keep the glass revolving. Brent Sumner keeps the swinging doors moving toward a printed journal, and Clint Tyler launches through portals to cyberspace by posting our journal online. Our sponsors provide door-frames for our work. I commend us all for holding doors open for each other.

Sometimes a door slams shut. It doesn't matter which side we are standing on, the shock hurts for a bit. When that door slams, muster the courage to find the key by remembering the gratifying moment of the click, the push, and a new beginning.



# Reflecting

*Carl Boyington*

*Executive Director, 1999 - 2019 UASSP*

As I look back on the time I have spent as Executive Director of the Utah Association of Secondary School Principals, it has been one of the highlights of my life. I accepted that assignment in 1999, so it has been a total of 20 years as part of an organization that has changed my life forever!

My, how things have changed...the UASSP Conference presenter in 1999 was Michael Fullan and his fees were \$2500 plus travel and hotel. We were sharing the cost with the UAESP. We found out that Fullan traveled First Class, and his travel and hotel costs were as much as his total fee.

Today, Michael Fullan has a fee of \$10,000 plus expenses. This really cramped our budget as we only had 125 attendees at \$85 each. Membership was \$100. Yes, times have changed, as we are now at the Marriott with 225 attendees packed in and presenter's charging an average of between \$6000 and \$9000, plus expenses. Conference attendance fee is now \$200, and membership is \$150. It is inevitable that there will need to be an increase in both membership and conference attendance fees, as inflation keeps taking its toll (...and who knows what the Tariff War will bring...Ha Ha!)

I have seen many changes in the Curriculum, Testing Accountability, Funding, Quality Teaching, Teacher Shortages, Need for more Counselors, need for more Mental Health Personnel, School Trust Land Funding, Pilot Programs, At Risk Programs, Charter Schools and on and on. The makeup of the Utah State Office of Educa-



tion (USOE) in relationship to the Utah State School Board (USBE) has brought new philosophies and directions, and of course, the Legislature wants to micromanage the Public Education System.

With all the changes and challenges that keep coming, there is one constant -- I have found that Utah has an incredible Public Education System

with its outstanding schools! I have always said, and promoted the fact, that "Great Schools Have Great Principals." The Administrators are the best!! They come each day to face new challenges. They create and implement strategies to compensate and successfully meet those challenges. They are dedicated, consummate professionals. They are engaged in providing each student the opportunity to be successful, to feel safe and have a knowledge that the Administrators, Teachers and Staff care for their welfare.

As the UASSP Executive Director, I have strived to provide the best professional development possible to help the Secondary School Administrators have tools, programs and ideas to help them be the very best!

The past twenty years have been an extremely rewarding experience for me. I have made many friends, and I am a better person because of my association with great Secondary School Principals.

Thank you for your support throughout our journey together, and thank you for representing Utah as the BEST Secondary School Administrators in the Nation!! Good Luck to you in the years to come.

***Carl Boyington is the Executive Director of UASSP and can be reached at [carl.boyington@uassp.org](mailto:carl.boyington@uassp.org) until August 1, 2019. After 20 years of incomparable service, he will retire.***

# Soil, Water, and Weeds: The “How” of the School Leadership Team

Joe Jensen, David Boren, Theron Murphy

*Education is a living process that can best be compared to agriculture. Gardeners know that they don't make plants grow. They don't attach the roots, glue the leaves, and paint the petals. Plants grow themselves. The job of the gardener is to create the best conditions for that to happen.*

*Ken Robinson & Lou Aronica, 2015*



Have you ever envied your neighbor's garden? How is it that with the same soil, seeds, fertilizer, weather conditions, and time invested that one neighbor seems to harvest unlimited vegetables while the other struggles to produce much at all—simply because of

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***When a school's culture supports SLT structures, teachers will thrive.***

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the differences in how those elements of gardening are administered? Similarly, how can two well-intentioned, hard-working principals who share nearly identical, adjacent schools with similar student and teacher demographics, achieve different results and have significantly different cultures in their schools? In education, we often focus on what we do. Educational books and conferences burst with best practice ideas, structures, processes, and next steps. While what best practices a principal implements matters, how a principal leads those best practice efforts makes the difference in eventual results. Principaling is a subtle art replete with nuance (Fullan, 2019).

In a recent article, we emphasized the importance of principals distributing leadership through a School Leadership Team (SLT) by putting these six elements in place:

- #1 Leverage the power of ratios
- #2 Assemble the right coalition of people and engage those closest to the work
- #3 Work from the inside-out and the outside-in
- #4 Have peers lead peers
- #5 Focus SLT meetings on building capacity
- #6 Create conditions and structures to build capacity (Jensen, Boren, Murphy, 2019)

These elements represent the what of effective SLTs. Just as a gardener with good soil, water, and fertilizer could experience mediocre results because of poorly administering these elements, a school could implement all six structural elements of effective SLTs and still flounder in mediocrity. Why? Because how these elements are employed shapes school culture. When a school's culture supports SLT structures, teachers

will thrive. Structures alone won't create the conditions we need in schools. Even a great principal can't make the difference alone, over time. Fullan and Quinn declare, "Good individuals are important, but cultures are more so" (2016, p. 4). "The leader's job is to create and nurture the culture we all need to do our best work" (Edmondson, 2019, p. 200). Principals must deliberately create and model the following cultural conditions for these six elements of SLTs to synergistically thrive:

- (1) Nurture conditions for teacher well-being
- (2) Co-create a clear, mission, vision, values, and goals (MVVG)
- (3) Maintain a realistic view of the current reality

### **Nurture Conditions for Teacher Well-Being—Getting the Soil Right**

The role of leadership is to create positive environments in which human beings can thrive.

J. Murphy & K. S. Louis, 2018, p. 1

In gardening, getting the soil right is foundational for plants to flourish. Equally, a culture of well-being for teachers sets the stage for school progress. The entire premise of creating a SLT is that as school leaders,

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***Candor and psychological safety are the main elements to getting the cultural soil prepared for SLTs to flourish.***

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our vision and abilities are limited and we need the input, thinking, and passion, of others, and they need to feel safe enough to be open, honest, and up-front with us. In short, we need the crucial culture of candor. Ed Catmull, founder of PIXAR, said, "Lack of candor, if unchecked, ultimately leads to dysfunctional environments" (2014, p. 86). He deliberately looked for ways to institutionalize candor by "putting mechanisms in place that explicitly say it is valuable" (pp. 86-87). Amy Edmondson echoed the importance of candor. She wrote, "without the critical ingredient that is candor, there can be no trust. And without trust, cre-

ative collaboration is not possible" (2019, p. 87). An effective SLT must have candor.

A culture of safety fosters candor. "If leaders want to unleash individual and collective talent, they must foster a psychologically safe climate where employees feel free to contribute ideas, share information, and report mistakes" (Edmondson, 2019, p. xvi). Principals must purposefully invite candor to their SLT, and they must purposefully honor and celebrate it when SLT members take the risk of being candid, especially when it conflicts with the principal's perspective. Candor and psychological safety are the main elements to getting the cultural soil prepared for SLTs to flourish.

The following characteristics work together to accelerate the culture of candor and psychological safety:

**View others with equality:** We must "see conversation partners as equals," meaning that "we do not see ourselves as better than others and our way of interacting shows that we see the value in other people" (Knight, 2016, p. 39) A principal should be an equal participant in the SLT process, not the king or czar of that team. If a principal sees himself as better than or more important it will kill candor and psychological safety. One indicator is our use of personal pronouns. If our use of I, me, and my exceed our use of we, us, and our, perhaps we think too highly of our own genius, abilities, vision, and efforts (Pennebaker, 2011). Another litmus test of equality is to notice how much each person talks during meetings. In studying what distinguished more and less effective teams, Google found that "each person on the team spoke just about equally and everyone felt safe sharing their ideas" (Achor, 2018, p. 37, italics added). Thus on the healthiest teams principals do not dominate the conversation, nor do they totally step aside and disengage. They are equal partners. If we're not sure how we're doing on the principal of equality, video record your next team meeting and notice your use of personal pronouns and the extent of each person's participation.

**Convey Vulnerability:** The principal that extends vulnerability fosters candor and psychological safety because it shows other members of the SLT that the principal recognizes her limitations and needs SLT member expertise. SLT members engage when principals sincerely reach out for input and perspective for improvement.

**Radiate Humility:** Equality and vulnerability foster humility. Catmull noted, “successful leaders embrace the reality that their models may be wrong or incomplete. Only when we admit what we don’t know can we ever hope to learn it” (2014, p. xvi). No principal succeeds solo. When a principal recognizes success depends on the entire team, humility can sprout.

**Create Connection & Belonging:** A culture of connection is one of the most important predictors of group success. Coyle said, “group performance depends on behavior that communicates one powerful overarching idea: We are safe and connected” (2018, p. 10). Creating a sense of belonging will not happen by chance. Purposeful efforts must be made by the principal to model and explicitly foster connection.

Certainly “the need to nurture, develop, and strengthen relationships is at the very core of what good leaders do” (Leithwood et al, 2013, p. 261). Let us be candid. Culture boils down to how we feel about and view others. A leadership position does not somehow make the principal’s opinions, views,

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***When a principal recognizes success depends on the entire team, humility can sprout.***

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and expertise magically superior to anyone else’s. Teachers, parents, and students can sense when we as school leaders views them as mere gardening tools, objects to be used for our own enlightened purposes (Buber, 1970). We must get over ourselves as positional leaders. Healthy cultures are not nurtured merely as a means to the principal’s end, but because principals truly value, respect, and rely on each individual’s perspective. Cul-

tures of caring plant the seeds for the type of safety, candor, equality, humility, vulnerability, connection, and trust required for effective teaming. As principals become these characteristics, trust blossoms in thousands of nearly invisible ways.

What would your staff say about current levels of candor and psychological safety in your SLT and school?

How could you deliberately develop equality, vulnerability, humility, connection, and belonging in your school?

**Co-create Clear Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals (MVVG)—Effectively Watering the SLT**

The goal should be established by the teams, not for the teams, if they are to be team goals.

Dufour and Marzano, 2011, p. 78

Clear, co-created MVVG is the educational equivalent of the constant nourishment provided by effective watering practices in a garden. Growth and progress in a school is left up to chance without them. Principals that embody equality, vulnerability, humility, and connection have prepped the educational soil for teachers to flourish. In that environment, teachers are not only willing, but eager to co-create a shared MVVG from the “inside-out and outside-in” with the SLT (Jensen, Boren, Murphy, 2019). By distributing leadership in the development of MVVG, we “leverage the power of ratios” and position “peers to lead peers” (Jensen, Boren, Murphy, 2018) knowing that “people support what they help to create” (deFlaminis, Abdul-Jabbar, Yoak, 2016, p. 35).

A principal in isolation can’t grasp all of the perspectives, roadblocks, or needs of a school. A high functioning SLT solves this problem. Shein and Shein urge: “Instead of heading into work wondering how you alone can solve the problem, what if you went to work, committed to sorting it out with a partner, a group, a large or small work team? It’s not up to you alone to solve the problem,

to lead to greatness, to change the world. It is up to you to create a learning environment in which you and your group can cooperate in

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***Gardeners can't control all elements such as weather or errant soccer balls.***

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identifying and fixing the processes that solve problems and maybe then change the world” (2018, pp. xii-xiii). It is actually through a high

functioning SLT that principals can become “nuanced leaders.” Fullan points out that “nuanced leaders know in their bones that no progress will be made in the absence of learning from and with the group” (Fullan, 2019, p. 18).

Thus, “when we are brave enough to expand power to others, suddenly we find that a huge weight is lifted off our shoulders” (Achor, 2018, p. 114). We remove ourselves from the center of school improvement efforts and instead put the co-created MVVG at the center. This decentering of the principal and centering of the MVVG encourages greater candor and collaboration. Some who hesitate to candidly share their opinions about the leader’s MVVG, might be more willing to candidly share their thoughts about co-created MVVG. Rather than members of the SLT holding a meeting-after-the-meeting to share

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***This decentering of the principal and centering of the MVVG encourages greater candor and collaboration.***

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with each other what they really feel, placing a co-created MVVG at the center allows everyone, including

the principal, to openly and freely explore what’s right in pursuit of the MVVG. This increases collaboration among everyone and fosters candor about our shared MVVG (see figure 1).

In your school, is the principal at the center of the leadership chart, or is the co-created MVVG at the center?

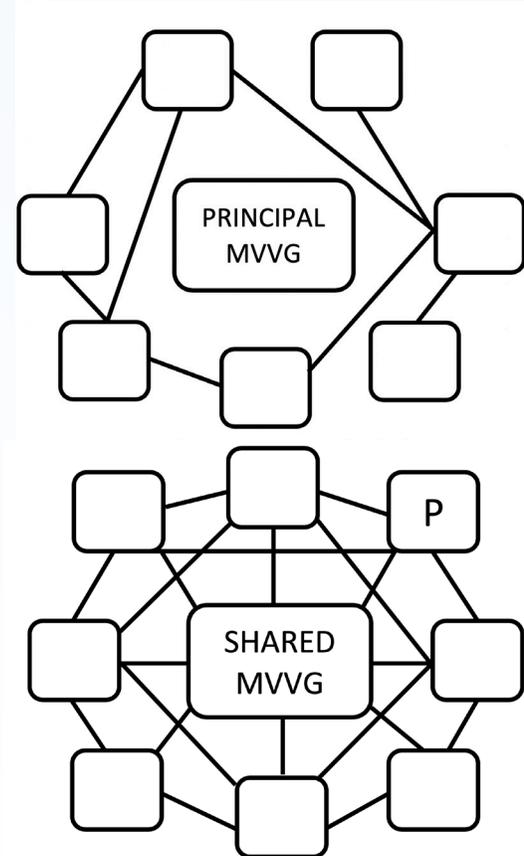


Figure 1. Levels of candor and collaboration for principal-centered MVVG and co-created MVVG.

**Maintain a Realistic View of the Current Reality—Weeding the Garden.**

Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.

Arthur Ashe

Gardeners can’t control all elements such as weather or errant soccer balls. The nuanced leader focuses on what they can control, such as weeds. Weeds immediately encroach on any garden, and we have to be vigilant about removing culture-killing weeds (gossip, negativity, drama, and such), or distraction weeds (compliance mandates, management issues, for instance). We must be “passionate promoters and protectors of shared vision and values” (DuFour & Eaker, 1998, p. 187). When we have a high functioning SLT, the job of weeding is shared by many instead of the principal shouldering

that task alone. And, fortunately, cultures of safety, trust, and candor allow us to address weeds more directly, effectively, and with less residual damage. In addition, addressing weeds is simpler and less personal if conversations are founded on a shared MVVG.

Even if our current culture is plagued with weeds, we must start where we are and be transparent about our current reality. The gap between current and desired reality can seem daunting. As Simon Sinek says, it's like "standing at the foot of a mountain" and

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***We must be urgent about improvement, but patient enough to let our collective efficacy develop.***

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wanting to "be at the summit." But he points out that sometimes what we "don't see is the mountain." He goes on to say, "I don't care if you go up the

mountain quickly or slowly, but there's still a mountain" (Sinek, 2017). Sometimes, making cultural changes can feel like climbing a tall mountain. We can only start one step at a time with small wins in low-stakes areas and enjoy the winning-streak momentum that results (Moss Kanter, 2006). Say thank you. Read best practice together. Ask for guidance. Apologize when needed. Leave treats on a teacher's desk. Smile. Learn students' names. Admit you don't know something. Make time to meet individually with each member of the SLT. Celebrate the positive. Buy the office staff lunch. Even if you don't know where to start, just "get started, then get better" (Eaker & Keating, 2009, p. 55). As one of our mentors often counseled, "Think big. Start small. Go slow." When moving toward positive cultural change, John Wooden's counsel is fitting. "When you improve a little each day, eventually big things occur...Not tomorrow, not the next day, but eventually a big gain is made. Don't look for the big, quick improvement. Seek the small improvement one day at a time. That's the only way it happens—and when it happens, it lasts" (as cited in Maurer, 2014, p. 27). Weed the garden constantly. Weeding only when the garden gets overgrown limits the harvest.

We can't plant tomato seedlings today and expect to harvest tomatoes tomorrow. Be patient in building effective SLT structures and cultures. Trust that best practice is just that—best practice—and if we embrace it, results will follow. We can only start where we are, whether we are master gardeners or novices. But start somewhere! Start by simultaneously working to nurture the necessary culture for SLTs while designing the six structures of SLTs. We must exercise patient urgency in this work. We must be urgent about improvement, but patient enough to let our collective efficacy develop. Don't pull up plants each week to check the roots.

- What Weeds Negatively Affect your School?
- What is the current SLT structure and culture at your school? What are the best next steps?

### **Conclusion**

Nearly 20 years ago, Dufour and Burnette pointed out that "the more accurate metaphor for the process of shaping culture is not erecting a building but cultivating a garden. A garden is nonlinear, with some elements dying out as others are being born. A garden is influenced both by internal and external factors. Its most vital elements occur underground and are not readily visible. Most importantly, a garden is fragile and requires very high maintenance. Even the most flourishing garden will eventually become overgrown if it is not nurtured" (2002, p. 27). Shaping and nurturing the culture of a school through the school leadership team is crucial to creating the conditions for all teachers to thrive.

Let's get over the erroneous cultural tradition of the heroic school leader. This is easier said than done. Semantically "principal" connotes the "primary" person, or the person at the top of an organizational chart. Even our syntax refers to that position as the principal.

We need to reframe this position as a “principal creator of conditions” through the SLT. “The conclusion of a decade of research is clear: It’s not faster alone: it’s better together” (Achor, 2018, p. 22). While our focus in this article is SLTs, it is also valuable to note that to bring coherence to the whole community, we need to create the same conditions among our classified employees, school community councils, parent organizations, and student groups.

When a principal nurtures the skills and abilities of a SLT to lead a school staff, every teacher benefits, and by extension, students will blossom. After all, “school improvement means people improvement” (Dufour & Marzano, 2011, p. 5). The structural elements, or the what of SLTs, is somewhat straightforward. A principal can go to work tomorrow to put in place the 6 elements of effective SLTs. In a month, those elements could be functioning to some degree. However, it is how these elements are implemented that requires nuanced leadership. And it is the how discussed in this article that determines whether the culture will fully support the six structures of a SLT. “Structure does make a difference, but it is not the main point in achieving success. Transforming the culture-changing the way we do things around here-is the main point” (Fullan, 2001, p. 43). When a high functioning SLT structure and culture mutually reinforce one another, the school can truly achieve its potential for growth.

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# Supporting New Teachers to Ensure Success

Kandace Barber

The goal of the Granite District Teacher Induction Program is to ensure all teachers will be successful in their classrooms by helping them to implement research-based strategies. This success will help create job satisfaction and retention.

The Granite District Induction Program begins with a two-day summer orientation. Provisional teachers are introduced to district

tools and resources to support their instruction. The premise is when teachers begin their job with a clear understanding of what they need to know and do, along with the success criteria for their new job, they will be able to become proficient.

During summer orientation, provisional teachers are trained using a manual, coined “The Flipbook.” The Flipbook is broken into the educator standards and aligned to research-based strategies to ensure their students make growth. This manual helps provisional teachers understand “WHAT” the district would like them to implement in their classrooms. In addition to the manual, the Teacher Support department has developed a website of resources, videos, and articles on “HOW” to implement these skills. This website is found at [www.graniteteachersupport.com](http://www.graniteteachersupport.com).

The mission and vision of Granite District are taught by the superintendent. Teachers then participate in workshops on technology programs, curriculum resources, implementing positive behavior supports, professional learning community expectations, using data to drive instruction, services provided by human resources, and the district mentoring program.

Staff development focuses on the following:

**Learning Environment** –With the belief that all students can learn, the induction program helps teachers build positive relationships. Teachers learn how to set up their classrooms with appropriate procedures, routines, and rewards to support PBIS programs in their schools.

**New This Year!**

## Granite School District Teacher Flipbook

Teaching in Granite School District

Instruction & Assessment	Planning & Preparation	Learning Environment	Professional Responsibility
Lesson Design/Delivery	Planning Process	Learning Environment	Educator Standards
Introducing a Lesson	What Do Students Need to Know?	Creating a Growth Mindset Classroom	Reflection of Practice
Reviewing/Revising	Assessing Student Learning	Establishing Norms	
Assessing Student Learning	Assessing Student Learning		
Collaborative Instruction	Planning Calendar - Developing Units	Relationships	PLCs
Present Content	What Do Students Need to Know?	Objectives	Flipbook Class - Create Your Own

**Check out our new matrix designed from our flipbook**

**Strategy Cards**

These cards contain instructional strategies for teacher use within the Gradual Release of Responsibility model (see graphic on back of card). Each card contains a brief description of the strategy and steps to follow when implementing in a lesson. On the backside of the card, ideas are provided to differentiate the strategy to meet the needs of a variety of learners, as well as variations of the strategy.

**Instructional Strategies/Checking for Understanding**

**Ripple** - Think, Write, Pair, Share - Students reflect on an idea. Students will pair up and turn and talk to a partner. They will discuss their answers.

**Quick Write** - Select a prompt. Give students a specific amount of time to think and jot their responses (3-5 minutes). Follow up with Think-Pair-Share.

**Gallery Walk** - This discussion technique allows students to be actively engaged as they walk throughout the classroom. They work together in small groups to share ideas and respond to meaningful questions, discussions, images, problem-solving situations or texts.

**Reading with Pen in Hand** - Students take notes as they read.

**Guided Notes/Graphic Organizer** - Teacher prepares Guided Note handout ahead of time with spaces for students to fill in key information. A graphic organizer is a visual display that demonstrates relationships between facts, concepts or ideas. A graphic organizer guides the learner's thinking as they fill in and build upon a visual map or diagram.

**Cornell Notes** - The Cornell method provides a systematic format for condensing and organizing notes.

**Exit Ticket** - The Exit ticket is simply a question that is posed to all students prior to class ending. Students write their answer on a card or piece of paper and hand it in as they exit the class.

**Take 5** - (3 to 5 minutes on your own, 2 to share) Students reflect for 3 minutes and share with other students for 2 minutes.

**Quick Draw** - Select a major concept from lesson or unit. Students will think about the meaning and create a visual image that represents the concept during a specific one minute (3-5 minutes). Students share their answers in Think-Pair-Share, Chalkboard Splash, or small group.

**Chalkboard Splash** - Select prompt, question or sentence starter. Students generate responses and randomly copy them onto whiteboards or chart papers. Students will wander around looking for similarities, differences and surprises and record their reactions. Students will share their observations in a small group.

**Thumb Up When Ready** - Ask students to reflect on prompt. Explain that when they have a thought or are finished, they should put their thumb up to show they are ready to move on. They will discuss their idea in Think-Pair-Share.

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## Pages of Interest

### PG&E Steps

This page will show you the steps you need to take to complete your PG&E goals for the school year.

### Need Help with PLAN? - [Click here](#)

### Planning for Substitutes

This page will direct you to a checklist of ideas and materials to make your substitute experience run smoothly, so that you can leave your classroom in the hands of another professional without worrying about the room and students you left behind.

### Instructional Strategies Resources

This page will provide you with a list of links and resources that will give you several instructional strategies to help change up your classroom and get your students more engaged with your lesson plan.

### Preparing for Parent Teacher Conferences

This page will direct you to a checklist of ideas and materials to prepare for a successful parent teacher conference. You can prepare, execute, and follow-up successfully with the resources on this page.

### Lesson Design Resources

This page will provide you with a list of links and resources that will give you several ideas on how to design a lesson and get your students more engaged with your lesson plan.

### Quick Links

This page will link you to a series of links most commonly used by teachers in the school district. This is your one stop shop for the majority of the links you will need to survive the school year.

### **Planning and Preparation**

– Teachers are shown how to differentiate instruction and focus on the core curriculum with the help of curriculum maps, pacing guides, and proficiency scales.

### **Instruction and Assessment**

– Teachers are given an instructional framework to help them

supported by four district teacher specialists. School mentors attend district trainings to learn how to run staff development and coach new teachers. Teachers select goals to work on throughout the year and complete conversation logs to reflect on next steps and successes. Mentors observe their provisional teachers and provide feedback. Mentors have access to live coaching equipment and swivel cameras to video tape lessons. Mentors and provisional teachers are provided with substitutes, so they can observe master teachers. Struggling provisional teachers can access extra support specialists who come to the classroom several hours per week and help implement priority skills to improve teaching. All Title One Schools have full time instructional coaches who also support the provisional teachers.

Granite District believes all provisional teachers can be successful when they know what they are expected to learn from the educator standards and how those skills will be evaluated. The induction program provides support with staff development, mentors, instructional coaches, goal setting, quality instruction models, and a manual and website with research-based resources.

to implement explicit instruction and develop the metacognition of what to include in each part of the lesson. Teachers look at how to monitor students for learning.

**Professional Responsibility** – Teachers are given a framework of looking at data and

instructional strategies in the professional learning communities (PLCs) that they participate in.

All provisional teachers are guided by a trained school mentor for three years who are

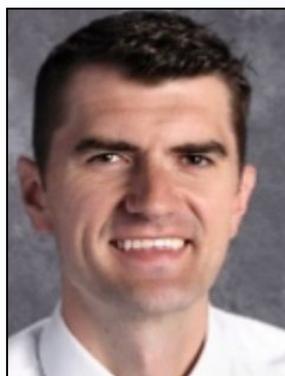


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# Joy in the Journey: Principals Allowing Schools to Shape Their Personal Capacity

Dr. Aaron R. Wilson

In the early stages of researching principals' professional capacities, Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis (1996) suggested that several factors influence the leadership of a principal, including school traits and the principals' personal characteristics. There are "antecedent variables (that influence) the exercise of principal leadership. School characteristics, such as community type and homogeneity, school size, and student socioeconomic status, and school level, have been found to influence how principals approach their jobs. Furthermore, research suggests



the personal characteristics also influence how principals enact their role. These antecedent variables include gender, prior teaching experience, and values and beliefs of the administrator" (p. 21).

During individual open-ended interviews with 24 administrators in a large Utah school district, these principals and assistant principals describe how they developed their individual capacities to address workplace problems. Embedded within their responses were statements that validated claims by Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis. Each cited their personal characteristics as having shaped how they enact their role, and also spoke to the interplay of school characteristics and their own capacity development.

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***As practicing principals, how can we be sure that the style we take to leading schools is what's best for our organization rather than simply us adopting the leadership approach to which we feel best suited?***

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experience, and values and beliefs of the administrator" (p. 21).  
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Regardless of the institutions from which these principals (referenced in pseudonyms) received their administrative licensure, and regardless of their school setting, each principal describes how he or she approaches his or her work very differently. These principals play to their strengths, leveraging their personal capacities to lead schools in ways that are unique and tailored to align to their capacities.  
Lisa, an elementary principal, notes, "Well I don't think there is any one way to be a principal, but I think the best principals bring the best of what they have and then surround themselves with people who offset where they have weaknesses." Jesse, an elementary principal, offers a similar statement: "I keep thinking that there is someone who doesn't answer anything like me. I mean not at all completely different thinker, and has completely different skills, but they are probably a great principal."

Adding to the conversations about how principals are markedly unique from each other, Brian says, “There are administrators that I feel like I can look at and are rock stars as far as that organization piece or rock stars as far as this piece. But it’s... an individual experience. We are not talking about

robots!”

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***Where does “playing to our strengths” have its limits in meeting the unique needs of our schools for solutions that lie outside our current capacities?***

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Bruno, a secondary assistant principal who has worked under multiple head principals and with even

more fellow assistant principals, reflects on the capacities of professional peers he has had throughout his career: “I think it’s interesting because just about every administrator I have worked with or seen work handles things differently and of course has a different skillset.”

We admire the unique capacities each principal brings to the school communities he or she respectively leads. Yet a question emerges: as practicing principals, how can we be sure that the style we take to leading schools is what’s best for our organization rather than simply us adopting the leadership

approach to which we feel best suited? In other words, where does “playing to our strengths” have its limits in meeting the unique

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***While principals use their capacities to benefit school and improve its outcomes, it is found that as a result, the process enhances principals’ personal capacities.***

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needs of our schools for solutions that lie outside our current capacities?

As much as we would like to think that we are completely suited for each facet of the principalship, it is established

that “the role of principal has swelled to include a staggering array of professional tasks and competencies” (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyer-son, 2005, p. 3), that include managerial, instructional, and political responsibilities (Cuban, 1988). More daunting still is the reality that principals are the lynchpin for the success of school performance (Grisolm & Harrington, 2010), school culture and student learning (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004), and in recruiting and keeping effective teachers (Betelle, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2009). Thus, much of the success of education rests on the school principal, and even though principals are tasked with a multitude of roles that are not reasonable for one person to possess.

With so much expected of them—and so much depending on them—it is no wonder why principals rely on their individual strengths to fulfill their roles. They may simply feel that they have no other option. Jesse, an elementary school principal admits, “I would not be in this position unless it was for my disposition. I don’t have the skills and I don’t have the knowledge to be in this chair.” Sparky is not alone. With daunting tasks facing them to which they feel unprepared to meet, even the most “promising leaders... are... prematurely discouraged” (Turnbull, Riley, & MacFarlane, 2013, p. 39), quickly burning out and leaving the profession.

How can school leaders combat principal burnout, turnover, and attrition? First, we must recognize the fact that we entered a wonderfully challenging profession whose demands “exceed[s] the reasonable capacities of any one person” (Davis et al., 2004) Then, as we give our all to lead our schools, we find ways to

identify and leverage our unique capacities in our profession. In playing to our strengths, we will find that there exists an iterative and symbiotic relationship between the principal's capacities and his or her school organization: both grow in tandem with each other. While principals use their capacities to benefit school and improve its outcomes, it is found that as a result, the process enhances principals' personal capacities.

Therefore, the principalship can be considered an individualized journey for each of us. Jen, an elementary principal notes, "I think one of the beauties of all the jobs like ours that are about human interaction, is that no matter what strengths you have, there's a pathway for you to be a good administrator, right? .... There's no magic set of, no set résumé that equals a good principal each time—that it's about the journey." The journey can be frustrating and overwhelming should we allow it to be, or one that can increase our capacities and inspire us. May we adopt the latter approach.

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# Helping Resistant Teachers Build Student Relationships

Kelli Miller

One of the most effective strategies for increasing student learning in the classroom

is to

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***For teachers who find the right combination of caring and high expectations for their students, a magical amount of learning is occurring in their classroom.***

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However, despite the efforts to get all staff members involved in these programs, every school still has at least a handful of teachers who cannot seem to connect with most of their students.

A lot of resources and research are available for teachers and educational leaders about how to establish these positive and productive teacher-student relationships. But, what do we do

strengthen the teacher-student relationship. but we know that already. We have experienced it in our schools. We all know teachers who have effectively formed positive relationships with their students, and

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***While principals use their capacities to benefit school and improve its outcomes, it is found that as a result, the process enhances principals' personal capacities.***

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as a result, they rarely have discipline problems in their classroom and students are more willingly do the work assigned in their classes.

On their professional development website, the Australian Society for Evidence Based Teaching poignantly states, "Strong teacher student relationships shape the way children think and act in school... [Students are] more willing to have a go at hard work, to risk making mistakes, and to ask for help when they need it" (2019). For teachers who find the right combination of caring and high expectations for their students, a magical amount of learning is occurring in their classroom.

Many of our schools include in their improvement plans a goal and action plan to strengthen these relationships. Our schools have adopted or created some great programs in their efforts to ensure that students have positive role models and advocates at school.

with our teachers who are resistant to building these relationships? Or worse, how do we address our teachers who do not seem to have the skills to do so? We all have them in our buildings. Their students meet with our counselors, begging to be transferred out of their classes. We get frequent calls and emails from these students' parents.

It is fairly easy to hold our teachers accountable for things like following the curriculum, collaborating with their teams and being to work on time. It is much harder to hold teachers accountable for the softer skills: being a caring adult, having empathy for their students' situations, using trauma-informed practices. Not only are these things much harder to measure, they lead to some really difficult discussions. How do you tell a hard-working (or no so hard-working) teacher: "You seem to lack emotional intelligence? Let's work on that?"

These are difficult conversations that often result in defensiveness and pushing blame, and so they are too often avoided. However, with a delicate approach, these conversations can lead to a great deal of improvement in our school's culture and student's learning.

### Understand Why

Addressing this concern starts with understanding why these teachers have so much

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***It is fairly easy to hold our teachers accountable for things like following the curriculum, collaborating with their teams and being to work on time. It is much harder to hold teachers accountable for the softer skills.***

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difficulty forming positive relationships with their students. Through observation and conversation with these teachers, we can come to understand these reasons and begin to

formulate a plan for addressing each teacher individually.

Some teachers do not connect well with their students simply because they do not see the value in doing so. They see their role in a very utilitarian manner. They teach, the

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***We have all also known teachers who are trying to form relationships in their classroom, but most of their students are not responding.***

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students learn; they deliver information, the students receive it. It does not matter to them that their students do not like them or care about

them. The fallacy in this way of thinking is very simply stated by Rita Pierson (2013) in her famous Every Kid Needs a Champion TED Talk: “Kids don’t learn from people they don’t like.” If students do not feel they

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***Just as students are not going to be responsive or self-reflective when a teacher they do not like or trust gives them feedback, teachers are likely to simply become defensive when an administrator they do not trust asks them to make some changes.***

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are valued or respected by the teacher, they are not going to value or respect what that teacher is delivering in their classroom.

Other teachers believe that forming a relationship means that they will become their students’ friend,

relinquishing their authority and control in the classroom. These are typically the teachers who complain that students are not being held accountable for their actions and are typically “so focused on [that] accountability

that they ignore the relational piece. They are intent on showing students that regardless of their adverse experiences, they are expected to meet a strict standard of behavior and self-management” (Souers & Hall, p. 106). They also often expect respect and hard work from students simply because of their position as the teacher. This mindset and such a demeanor often make it difficult for students to gain trust in the teacher and be comfortable in their classroom, making it less likely that the teacher is ever able to gain the ‘control’ they so desire in the first place.

There are also teachers who do not put effort into forming relationships with their students because they do not feel it is possible to form a connection with all of them. Most high school teachers have more than one hundred students per year, and it seems like a waste of valuable instructional time to truly get to know each one. However, as Souers and Hall (2016) state, “If [students] know we will be relentless in our support of their endeavors, forgive them the errors they make along the way, and maintain our determination that they will live up to their potential and our expectations, then the relationships will follow” (p. 96). If teachers are consistent about these messages, it is possible for all our students to feel a connection to them, even when they do not have time to forge a closer connection with each and every one.

We have all also known teachers who are trying to form relationships in their classroom, but most of their students are not responding. These teachers are typically inadvertently sending negative messages to their students and may need to spend some time analyzing their core beliefs or hidden biases about students. These “beliefs about students are important because they subconsciously influence how [teachers] treat each child” (The Australian Society for Evidence Based Teaching, 2019). Often, if a teacher is too permissive of misbehavior or allows students to turn in poor-quality work, they are telling students that they do not believe they can do better. When a teacher is too quick to

use a label to explain or excuse a student's behavior, they are diminishing and devaluing that student.

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***When a difficult conversation about how a teacher conducts him or herself with students is approached, that teacher will not be reflective of their practice if the administrator has not taken to time personally observe teacher conduct.***

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These teachers are generally very well-intentioned, but they are sending messages to their students that inhibit their ability to connect.

#### **Build Trust**

Once the teachers needing guidance in forming relationships with students have been identified and we understand why they are having difficulty, we can start the work of having those difficult conversations. However, these will not go well if the administrator has not taken the time to build trust and their own positive relationship with the teachers in their school.

Just as students are not going to be responsive or self-reflective when a teacher they do not like or trust gives them feedback, teachers are likely to simply become defensive when an administrator they do not trust asks them to make some changes. In his book entitled *Better Conversations*, Jim Knight (2016) describes, "When people don't trust each other, their conversations can be cautious, empty, even frustrating and dehumanizing." Especially when addressing the potentially negative effect they are having on their students, we need to have those conversations after we have built trust and a positive

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***It starts with having honest conversations about what has been observed and what has been reported by students and parents.***

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relationship with the teacher. Otherwise, the conversation may be unproductive and end up having the opposite effect we intended.

An important part of building trust and having meaningful conversation with teachers is knowing what is happening in every classroom. This can be a difficult task in our large schools, so it may not be reasonable for the principal alone. But, someone on the ad-

ministrative staff should have at least a general idea of how each teacher typically runs their class and interacts with their students, and this is "most powerful if it is routine, and not only associated with formal evaluations" (Gill, 2017). When a difficult conversation about how a teacher conducts him or herself with students is approached, that teacher will not be reflective of their practice if the administrator has not taken to time personally observe that conduct. The teacher will not trust that we really know what changes need to be made if we have not seen it for ourselves.

Consistency is another important aspect of building trust and rapport with teachers. Even if they do not agree with their administrator about everything, if the goals and values displayed are clear and consistent, teachers will come to respect those goals and values. If work needs to be done to improve how a teacher interacts with students, they need to have seen their leader model it. Treat students with dignity, talk about them respectfully, and model student-centered thinking in every conversation.

#### **Have Honest Conversations**

When we have built trust and have identified who needs our support in forming positive relationships with their students, we are ready to begin this work. It starts with having honest conversations about what has been observed and what has been reported by students and parents.

If my principal or district administration were receiving feedback regarding a negative perception of me, I would want to know. I would want the opportunity to reflect upon what is causing that perception and make adjustments to correct it. We need to operate under the assumption that our teachers would also like that opportunity and treat them like the professionals they are.

Now, if one student states out of anger over a failing grade that they believe their teacher hates them, this might be an isolated incident. But, if many students are reporting

that their teacher does not like them or other students and can specify why they believe that, this teacher needs to know. They need to know that they are making students feel this

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***When the teachers who need to improve their relationships with students are convinced that they need to do so, they need support and resources.***

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way, and they need to know that if they are making students feel this way on purpose, their administration is not going to support them in that. In all likelihood, though,

this is not intentional, and they need to have this conversation with a supervisor they trust, one they believe will help them.

Sometimes, these teachers are not aware that they are having a negative effect on their students, and simply bringing it to their attention will help them be more self-reflective and make some positive changes. Other times, however, the teacher is aware that there is a problem, but they do not know how to fix it. This is when we can offer some help.

### **Provide Resources**

When the teachers who need to improve their relationships with students are convinced that they need to do so, they need support and resources. It is hard work to develop and deliver curriculum; it is even harder to adjust our own beliefs and behavior to better serve our students. Help these teachers shift their mindset and understand that it is possible to have a positive relationship, even with their most difficult students.

Often, our teachers who have difficulty connecting with students are also the teachers talking negatively about them in the faculty room. It is hard to imagine that a teacher can spend their lunch period griping about the laziness and apathy of their students, then go into the classroom and put forth a genuine effort to engage those students in their lesson. These teachers have already decided that their students don't care; why put effort into trying to force them to? These teachers may need to practice talking about students differently.

One simple and important adjustment could be to ask these teachers to stop categorizing them. "When a student becomes more to us than the class clown, mean girl, drama queen, geek or jock, it is easier to remember that each student matters and is worth our time" (Wormeli, 2015). When we deduce students to one characteristic, behavior, or disability, we are diminishing their value. Even if the teacher never shares with the student how she has categorized him, she treats him differently because of that characterization, and this inhibits their ability to form a positive relationship. Teachers prone to gripe about or categorize their students need frequent modeling of and guidance for a more positive way of discussing students and some strategies that help them learn more about their students than what they see on the surface.

Other teachers end up in adversarial relationships with their students because they have difficulty keeping their emotions under control when students misbehave. These teachers are prone to feel personally offended when a student is less than compliant, often forgetting that we are working with children and adolescents who have not had the time and experience to develop a firm grip on their impulse control. Matching their lack of control with our own is never a recipe for success; someone has to be the adult, and it is best if that can be the teacher. Instead, when a student misbehaves, we need to "help him see how his words and actions have consequences, guiding him in making amends and restoring trust" (Wormeli, 2015). Helping teachers develop awareness of and control over their own emotions is an important first step in adopting this student discipline philosophy.

Teachers in adversarial student relationships will also often focus on punishing a student after he or she has misbehaved, whereas the more effective teachers focus on trying to prevent the behavior from occurring in the future (Whitaker, 2012). These are likely the teachers who are very concerned about maintaining control in their classroom; they are often frustrated that their administra-

tion will not ‘hold students accountable’ for their actions. But, if the teacher is focused on punishment, and the administrator is focused on a change in behavior, their definition of

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***These shifts in thinking are not easy and will take time. Teachers who need to make those shifts will need guidance and support.***

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accountability is very different. These teachers need to be asked: ‘Do you want revenge, or do you

want to prevent this from happening again?’ Of course, all teachers are going to advocate for the latter, so it is important to define the process of changing behavior for your school and expect that all teachers adhere to that process in their classrooms.

These shifts in thinking are not easy and will take time. Teachers who need to make those shifts will need guidance and support. They will need to be consistently reminded of the power of positive relationships. It is easy to teach the students who come to school with all the academic and behavioral tools they need to be successful, and we need to connect with and challenge those students. But, for many students, school does not come easily, and “the tough ones show up for a reason. It’s the connection. It’s the relationships” (Pierson, 2013). If we do not foster this relationship, the majority of our students will also not be able to connect with the learning and will therefore not be successful in their classes. We need to converse with and help our teachers who are unable or unwilling to do this. We cannot avoid these difficult conversations. The stakes are simply too high.

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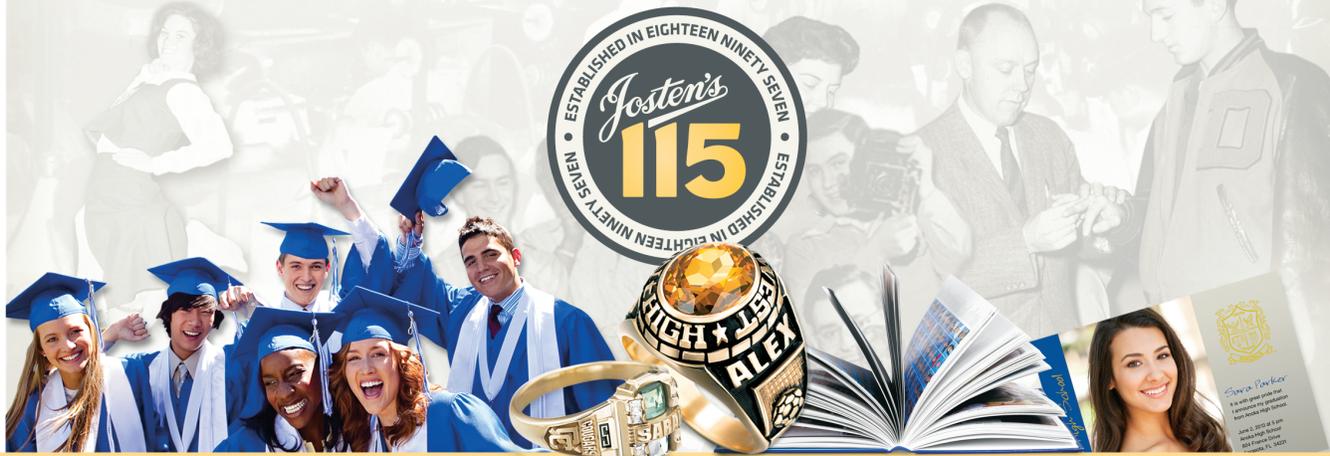
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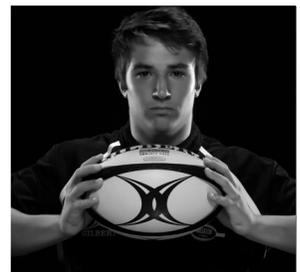
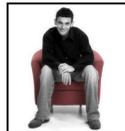
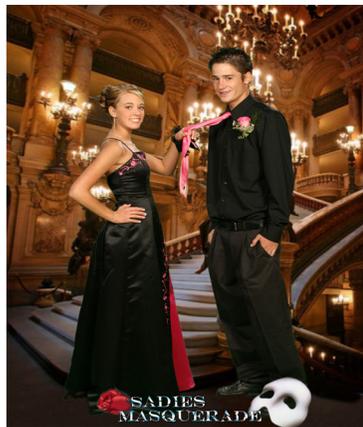


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