

5 PRACTICES of EFFECTIVE PRINCIPALS

By Pamela Mendels

What exactly is it that effective principals do that ripples through classrooms and boosts learning, especially in failing schools? Since 2000, The Wallace Foundation has been trying to answer that question. A *Wallace Perspective* report that takes a look at the foundation's research and field experiences finds that five practices in particular seem central to effective school leadership (The Wallace Foundation, 2012):

When principals put each of these elements in place — and in harmony — principals stand a fighting chance of making a real difference for students.

Reference

The Wallace Foundation. (2012, January). *The school principal as leader: Guiding schools to better teaching and learning.* New York: Author.

Source: Mendels, P. (2012, February). The effective principal: 5 pivotal practices that shape instructional leadership. *JSD*, 33(1), 54-58. Available at www.learningforward.org/docs/february-2012/mendels331.pdf.

- 1 Shape a vision of academic success for all students, one based on high standards.
- 2 Create a climate hospitable to education in order that safety, a cooperative spirit, and other foundations of fruitful interaction prevail.
- 3 Cultivate leadership in others so that teachers and other adults assume their part in realizing the school vision.
- 4 Improve instruction to enable teachers to teach at their best and students to learn at their utmost.
- 5 Manage people, data, and processes to foster school improvement.

Get the report

The School Principal as Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning is available free for download at <http://bit.ly/zcvOCB>.

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CREATE YOUR OWN CAREER PATH

New possibilities are emerging for many teachers who want to take on leadership roles but don't want to move into a principalship or central office position. Use these questions to explore possible activities and opportunities.

- What other roles, responsibilities, activities, or projects outside the classroom interest you as you consider your career path?
- What deeper skill sets would you like to pursue, and how will they help you on your journey?
- What types of opportunities for expanding your influence are available to you?
- What types of opportunities are not currently available that you would like to see available?

- How can you make the connection from your interests to student results?
- How can you make the connection from your interests to other benefits for the school?
- Who has a vested role in your interests, and how can they assist you?
- Who shares your desire for positive change in your areas of interest? How can you engage them as partners?
- What models do you see that might offer lessons for you?
- What steps can you take to make teachers more visible as leaders to influence change and impact your school or district's culture?



Source: Create your own career path. (2013, Spring). *The Leading Teacher*, 8(3), 6-7. Available at www.learningforward.org/publications/leading-teacher.

Going beyond the classroom

Half of the teachers surveyed in *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Challenges for School Leadership* (MetLife, 2012) are interested in a hybrid role that combines classroom teaching with other responsibilities, three times the number who are interested in becoming a principal.

Fewer than two in 10 (16%) teachers surveyed are at least somewhat interested in becoming a principal, including only 6% who are extremely or very interested in this option. In fact, most teachers (69%) are not at all interested in becoming a principal.

Reference

MetLife. (2012). *The MetLife survey of the American teacher: Challenges for school leadership*. New York, NY: Author.

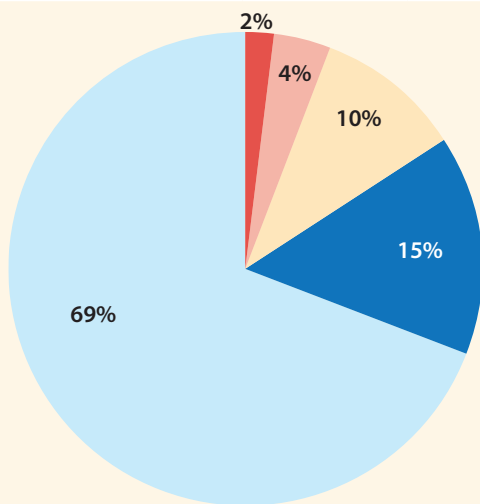
Get the report

The *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Challenges for School Leadership* is available free for download at

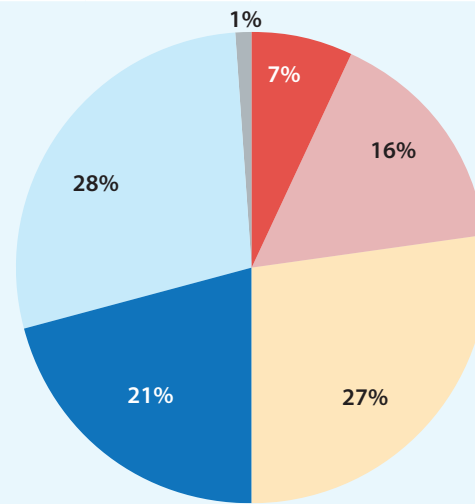
www.metlife.com/assets/cao/foundation/MetLife-Teacher-Survey-2012.pdf.

TEACHER INTEREST IN NEW ROLE: HOW INTERESTED ARE YOU IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING?

Becoming a principal



Teaching in the classroom part-time combined with other roles or responsibilities in your school or district



KEY

Extremely interested

Very interested

Somewhat interested

Not very interested

Not at all interested

Don't know

POWERFUL WORDS

“The next wave of teacher leadership is when teachers can incubate and execute bold ideas in both policy and pedagogy beyond schools, states, and even nations.”

— Center for Teaching Quality founder Barnett Berry, in “Charting new career paths for teacher leaders,” *The Leading Teacher*, Spring 2013. Available at www.learningforward.org/publications/leading-teacher.

