

Marshall Memo 225

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education

March 10, 2008

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Quotes of the Week

“The key is not to prioritize what’s on your schedule but to schedule your priorities.”
Stephen Covey (quoted in item #1)

“A sitting principal is a sitting duck.”
Kim Marshall (see item #1)

“Good time management includes knowing your limits; planning for the long haul; and finding ways to fuel your physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual energy.”
Ibid.

“Two of your best friends in time management are the delete key and the trash can.”
Chris Hitch (see item #2)

“By using time as a variable and frequently monitoring progress, the school has begun to drastically shift its culture by having teachers look for ways to help students prove proficiency and earn credits outside of adult-created time lines.”
David Nagel (see item #3)

“It’s better than a slap in the face. But honestly, I don’t think about it. We’re here every day working and pushing; that’s what we’ve been doing for years. We don’t come into this for the money, and most of us don’t leave it because of the money.”

Ruth Lopez, a New York City teacher, on the district’s new merit pay program,
quoted in a *New York Times* article by Jennifer Medina, Mar. 5, 2008 (p. 1, 21)
http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/05/nyregion/05incentive.html?_r=1&scp=3&sq=Jennifer+Medina&st=nyt&oref=slogin

1. Ten Keys to Managing Time and Priorities Effectively

“How can a dedicated principal work really, really hard but fail to get significant gains in student achievement?” asks Kim Marshall in this *Principal Leadership* article. “The answer is obvious: by spending too much time on the wrong things and not enough on the right things.” H.S.P.S. (Hyperactive Superficial Principal Syndrome) is a perennial problem for principals; it’s a constant struggle to identify and work effectively on the right stuff and avoid being consumed by things that don’t really make a difference. Based on front-line experience and recent research, Marshall offers these pointers and a self-assessment rubric.

• *Identify a few “big rocks.”* In his book, *First Things First* (1996), Stephen Covey tells the story of a time management expert who put three big rocks into a mason jar and asked his listeners if it was full. Sure, they said. He then poured in a bucket of gravel and asked again. Probably not, was the response. He then poured in sand, and finally water. The moral? If you don’t put the big rocks in first, your time will be filled with smaller things and you’ll never get to the most important ones. “The key,” says Covey, “is not to prioritize what’s on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.”

So what are the big rocks for principals? Marshall offers the following list, saying that it’s possible to focus effectively only on two or three, and those need to be chosen after a careful diagnosis of your school’s situation:

- Mission – Staff, students, and parents know that the goal is to get all students on track to graduate from college, following the Efficacy work hard/get smart paradigm.
- Climate – The school is safe, respectful, and culturally competent.
- Learning goals – Each teacher is working toward clear, detailed, rigorous, manageable state-aligned end-of-year student learning outcomes.
- Resources – Teachers have high-quality materials and tools.
- Informative data – Teacher teams use both in-the-moment and interim assessment results to continuously improve instruction, give students feedback, and re-teach.
- Safety nets – Struggling students get prompt, effective support, both academic and non-academic, inside and outside regular school hours.
- Supervision and evaluation – Teachers get frequent, honest feedback on their performance, all keyed to what’s producing and what’s not producing student learning.
- Professional growth – Teachers are constantly improving their craft through individual, small-group, and whole-staff activities, all informed by student learning results.

- Hiring – Every staff vacancy is filled with a top-notch performer.
- Parent involvement – Parents are optimally involved in their children’s education.

“Once you’ve put your lean, mean strategic plan in place,” says Marshall, “it’s much easier to say no to off-mission activities, to be present for students and staff members, and to roll with the punches (because there will still be those crazy days).”

- *Set clear expectations.* It’s essential that all teachers have a clear idea of what their students must know and be able to do by the end of the year, as well as schoolwide guidelines on which discipline infractions must be referred to the office – and which must be handled by teachers.

- *Decide on a planning system.* “The tug of H.S.P.S. is so constant and so inexorable that principals need a foolproof ritual to bring year-end goals down to the ground level,” says Marshall. The best time managers have a system for organizing priorities by the year, the month, the week, and the day, and a weekly planning time is essential. There also has to be a portable daily format that reminds the principal of the big rocks as well as daily obligations. At the end of most days, only half of these things will have been crossed off – and then it’s time to think about what’s really important and plan for the next day.

- *Schedule key meetings.* “People are busy,” says Marshall. “Students are demanding. There’s always too much to do.” If key meetings aren’t in everyone’s calendars, they won’t happen. Especially important are weekly meetings of grade-level and subject-area teacher teams, where the all-important “professional learning community” work takes place.

- *Write it down.* “The challenge for principals is remembering and acting on the myriad items that flood their brains every day,” says Marshall. It’s essential to have a system for recording things and following up – otherwise the leader’s credibility with teachers, students, and parents will go down, and the stress level will skyrocket. Some suggestions:

- Wear practical clothes that have pockets for a pen and paper or a holster for an all-purpose electronic device. Some women’s fashions are unhelpful in this regard, and many men refuse to put anything in their breast pockets after hearing junior-high-school peers called nerds. Marshall’s advice: Get over it!
- Consider writing must-remember items on different index cards so they are pre-sorted at the end of the day (e-mail on one, staff memo ideas on another, etc.).
- Avoid getting bogged down by paperwork by attacking in-basket items every hour or so and applying a 15-second rule: if it can’t be signed, delegated, filed, or thrown away in that amount of time, put it in the pile for late afternoon or evening. “During the day,” says Marshall, “I was a people person, not a paper pusher.”
- Do e-mail in efficient half-hour bursts early in the morning and late in the afternoon. “The beauty of e-mail is that it’s asynchronous,” says Marshall. “You can answer at your convenience (but hopefully within 24 hours).” The key to sanity is not using the audible signal that announces the arrival of each new e-mail (it’s not a ringing phone!) and resisting the urge to stay on top of e-mails (on your desktop computer or BlackBerry) during the day. One way to signal this approach to colleagues is to always

have an automatic response message on your computer: “I check e-mail each weekday afternoon after 3:00 p.m. If your message is urgent, please call me at 617-555-0105.”

- Be aware of the areas in which you’re likely to fall victim to P.A.U.T. (Putting Aside Unpleasant Tasks). “Be honest: what are the things that you hate to do and creatively avoid?” asks Marshall. Financial stuff? Angry notes? Filing? Once you’re clear on what they are, analyze why and develop a system for forcing yourself to do them – and reward yourself when they’re done.

- *Delegate, delegate, delegate.* Some principals have the urge to do everything themselves and can’t stand when things aren’t done just right. “The key to long-range sanity and effectiveness,” says Marshall, “is hiring good people, nurturing them, and refraining from micromanagement... [T]he goal is clear: teachers handling instruction and virtually all discipline problems, teacher teams using data to continuously improve teaching and learning, counselors preventing or dealing with students’ emotional problems, custodians handling the physical plant, students taking increasing responsibility for their own learning, and the principal freed up to orchestrate the whole process and to focus relentlessly on the big rocks (while occasionally picking up trash in the corridors).” Marshall also believes that teachers and principals should be pulled from classrooms and schools as little as possible (“Airline pilots aren’t trained while they are flying planes”) and that it’s important for the principal to be physically present as students enter the building in the morning, for at least one lunch period, and when students leave in the afternoon.

- *Get into classrooms.* Conventional, announced teacher evaluations have four built-in flaws, says Marshall: they don’t give principals a very accurate picture of day-to-day instruction; they put a premium on pleasing the boss, not on long-term student learning; they rarely improve teaching and learning; and they are so daunting and time-consuming that they prevent principals from being in classrooms on a regular basis. “Except for gathering evidence to dismiss an ineffective teacher,” he writes, “conventional evaluation is a poor use of a principal’s valuable time.” But what’s the alternative? Marshall suggests mini-observations – 4-5 short, unannounced classroom visits a day, with a candid, informal face-to-face feedback conversation with each teacher within 24 hours. This creates hundreds of substantive conversations about teaching and learning each year, keeps the principal in close touch with what’s really happening in classrooms, and saves time and energy for the biggest rock of them all – orchestrating a low-stakes process of teacher teams using interim assessment data to continuously improve teaching and learning.

- *Avoid time-wasters.* “A key to committing time to the right stuff is preventing or deflecting time-consuming crises and activities,” says Marshall, and quotes a useful analysis of three buckets for all activities (Freeston & Costa, 1998, summarized in Marshall Memo 146):

- Value-add work – activities that boost achievement for all students;
- Necessary work – not sexy, but essential (e.g., budget);
- Waste work – redoing things that weren’t done right the first time.

Time Management Rubric

4 - Expert

- a. I have a laser-like focus on student achievement and my strategic plan for the year.
- b. Staff know exactly what is expected of them in terms of classroom instruction and discipline.
- c. I have an effective personal planning system for the year, month, week, and day.
- d. All key teams (e.g., leadership, grade-level, SST) are scheduled to meet on a regular basis.
- e. I have a foolproof system for writing things down, prioritizing, and following up.
- f. I have highly competent people in key roles and delegate maximum responsibility to them.
- g. I visit 3-5 classrooms a day and give face-to-face feedback to each teacher within 24 hours.
- h. I have effective strategies for preventing or deflecting time-wasting crises and activities.
- i. I take care of myself, including family, health, exercise, sleep, and vacations.
- j. I regularly evaluate progress toward my goals and work on continuous improvement.

3 - Proficient

- a. I keep student achievement and my strategic plan in mind every day.
- b. Most of my staff know what is expected in terms of classroom instruction and discipline.
- c. I write down a list of what I want to accomplish each week and each day.
- d. Several key team meetings are scheduled to occur on a regular basis.
- e. I always write important things down and follow up on the most critical ones.
- f. Most of my key staff people are competent and I give them plenty of responsibility.
- g. I get into some classrooms every day and give personal feedback to each teacher.
- h. I am quite good at preventing or deflecting most time-wasting crises and activities.
- i. I try hard to balance my job with my family, health, exercise, sleep, and vacations.
- j. I periodically review how I am doing on my weekly goals and try to do better.

2 - Developing

- a. I periodically remind myself of my strategic plan and the goal of student achievement.
- b. I often have to remind teachers of policies on instruction and discipline.
- c. I come to work with a list of what I want to accomplish that day.
- d. Each month I have to schedule key meetings because they are not in people's calendars.
- e. I try to write things down but am swamped by events and sometimes don't follow up.
- f. Because several of my key staffers are not competent, I hesitate to delegate to them.
- g. I try to get into classrooms as much as possible but many days I don't succeed.
- h. I try to prevent them, but crises and time-wasters sometimes eat up large chunks of time.
- i. My family, health, exercise, sleep, and vacations are suffering because of my job.
- j. I try to keep track of how I am doing on my goals.

1 - Novice

- a. Each day is driven by events, not by my long-term goals.
- b. I am constantly reminding staff to use better procedures for instruction and discipline.
- c. I have a list in my head of what I want to accomplish each day but sometimes lose track.
- d. I call grade-level, curriculum, and other meetings when there is a crisis or an immediate need.
- e. I trust my memory to retain important tasks, but I sometimes forget and drop the ball.
- f. My key staff people are not that competent and I must do almost everything myself.
- g. I am so busy that I rarely visit classrooms.
- h. Large amounts of each day are consumed by crises and time-wasting activities.
- i. I neglect my family, rarely exercise, don't sleep enough, and am in poor health.
- j. I occasionally berate myself for not accomplishing my long-range goals.

When he was a principal, Marshall once overheard a teacher utter the word “jackass” as he strode past a classroom, but was too distracted to follow up. The price for not addressing this immediately was more than twenty hours of waste work dealing with the fallout when an angry parent stormed into the school the next day and had to be restrained from punching out the teacher for calling her daughter a jackass. “It’s truly astonishing how much time a screw-up can consume,” says Marshall ruefully. Other ways to cut down on wasted time include: clear meeting agendas and crisp closure; multi-tasking (within reason); and being out and about and spending very little time in your office for those frequent *got-a-minute?* drop-ins. “A sitting principal is a sitting duck,” he says.

- *Take care of yourself.* Burning out is not a good leadership strategy, says Marshall, “Good time management includes knowing your limits; planning for the long haul; and finding ways to fuel your physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual energy.” (Patterson, 2007) This means exercising regularly (three times a week is fine); eating the right foods (breakfast being the most important meal); getting enough sleep; carving out regular times for relaxation and fun (e.g., a movie every Friday night); building a support system; and orchestrating small wins (“there’s nothing like success to give us an extra shot of optimism and energy”).

- *Take stock.* Regularly evaluate your progress in the areas above, suggests Marshall, perhaps using a rubric like the one above. The goal is to score Proficient or Expert in all the areas, which should translate into solid achievement gains for all students.

“The Big Rocks: Priority Management for Principals” by Kim Marshall in *Principal Leadership* (Middle and High School Editions), March 2008 (Vol. 8, #7, p. 16-22), e-link available to NASSP members only

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2. More Time Management Tips

In this *Principal Leadership* article, Chris Hitch, formerly a principal and central office administrator and now a business-school professor who coaches principals, suggests three useful categories for managing the craziness of the principalship: Collection, processing, and action:

- *Collection* – Many principals gather incoming information during the day on scraps of paper, sticky notes, phone message slips, index cards, e-mails, instant messages, and voicemails. The more “collection points” there are, says Hitch, the greater the chance that you will lose track of something and not follow up. He suggests the following to streamline intake points and organize what you gather:

- Index cards – When he was a principal, Hitch always carried several index cards in his pocket, and when he needed to remember something, he wrote it down, one idea per card. At the end of the day he had 20-30 cards, and they were easy to organize and attack.
- Portfolio pads – Hitch used a pad to write to-do lists, and coded each item in the margin: a circle meant action required; a line through the circle meant he had delegated

it to someone else (and he wrote that person's initials below the circle); once the item had been dealt with, he drew a vertical line through the circle.

- 43 file folders – In an easily-accessible drawer in his desk, Hitch set up a bank of file folders, one set numbered from 1-31 for each day of the month, the rest labeled for the 12 months of the year. He dropped hard copies of paperwork that needed to be done each day and each month into the appropriate folder. Each day he would pull out the folder for the day and “power my way through it.”
- Phone pads – Hitch says he acts as his own secretary now, and has created a six-column phone log that might be useful for school secretaries: Status (has it been completed or delegated?), Date, Caller, Phone number, Issue, Response.
- E-mail folders – For e-mails that can't be responded to quickly, Hitch suggests dragging them into one of three folders to be dealt with later in the day: Follow-up, Reference, and Action.

• *Processing* – “Once you have reduced your collection points,” says Hitch, “you need a systematic method of processing the information you have collected.” He suggests the following:

- Delete – “Two of your best friends in time management are the delete key and the trash can,” he quips. “Your first move when dealing with new information is to trash the junk, either electronic or paper.” Of course if your secretary can do the filtering, so much the better.
- Decide – The next step is to decide who should follow up, if it's not you.
- Do or defer – The last step is to follow up yourself or defer it to another time. Hitch suggests a two-minute rule during the day: if you can't do it in 120 seconds, put it off until later (maybe in one of the 43 folders).

• *Action* – “If you spend all your time processing information but don't take action on it, you become a bottleneck and lose both credibility and effectiveness with your team,” says Hitch. “Most action items can and should be delegated to others. You can also delegate portions of a larger project to different people, rather than give them the entire project.” He suggests the following:

- Key individual file folders – Hitch creates file folders for key individuals and groups and pops anything pertaining to them into their file so it's all in one place when he wants to meet with them – an instant agenda.
- Delegation tracking sheet – Hitch uses a five-column format to keep track of delegated items: The action item, the date assigned, the date it's due, a revised date if it's pushed forward, and the date it's finally completed. Hitch has found that filling out this sheet while he is meeting with staff members greatly increases the chances that things will get done because they see him writing down the date.
- Your calendar – This is where important due-dates and ticklers are entered to keep track of everything in one place.

- The TOP three – “If you have more than 10 items on your daily task list, you probably won’t get to all of them,” says Hitch. He recommends taking five minutes to review your to-do list and writing down the three Top Overriding Priorities that absolutely must be done and make sure they are crossed off by the end of the day.

“10 Ways to Find More Time” by Chris Hitch in *Principal Leadership* (Middle School Edition), March 2008 (Vol. 8, #7, p. 36-40), e-link available to NASSP members only; Hitch can be reached at chris_hitch@unc.edu. For another excellent article on time management, see “Organize Your Life!” by James Fallows, summarized in Marshall Memo 41.

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3. Helping Failing High-School Students Catch Up

In this *Principal Leadership* article, Indianapolis assistant principal David Nagel describes how he and his colleagues at 3,000-student Ben Davis High School reacted when they realized that their four-year cohort graduation rate was only 65.8 percent. Principal Joel McKinney issued a “failure challenge” to drastically increase the number of students graduating with their cohort.

“Although there are many reasons for students to decide to walk away from high school,” says Nagel, “one prevailing reason is the hopelessness of falling so far behind in credits that they see no alternative... The thought of repeating an entire 18-week course – one they may have been very close to passing and may have missed by only a few percentage points – is enough to make any borderline 17-year-old not see the purpose of continuing.”

The school’s failure recovery system got teachers thinking about the root causes of each student’s impending failure and intervening in a timely manner:

- For students whose failure is linked to poor attendance, teachers contact parents or make home visits.
- Where failure is linked to missed work, teachers may declare “amnesty days” when any missing assignment can be made up for full credit.
- If students demonstrate mastery in cumulative assessments, they are not excessively penalized for early-semester missing work.
- When gaps and skill deficiencies in reading comprehension or problem solving are causing failure, students are given small-group instruction to catch up.
- When students’ grades at the end of the first semester are between 59% and 64% (65% is passing), they are given an Incomplete and offered the chance to attend special after-school classes or use online course software to complete the course work in the first month of the next semester and change their grade to a D with full credit.
- Struggling students are individually counseled about specifically what they need to do to prevent getting an F in a course. Students who don’t take advantage of this second chance have their grade changed to an F.
- Parents are also phoned as this window of opportunity closes and enlisted as motivators and helpers.

The result of these efforts last year was dramatic. In January 2007, 169 students earned or recovered 212 credits (some had multiple Incompletes). In the final push before the window closed, students recovered an additional 89 credits.

Nagel says that the biggest challenge implementing this program was changing the mindset of some staff members. “Efforts to give students as many opportunities as possible to prove proficiency and earn credits were interpreted by some as watering down the standards and didn’t seem fair, considering that the majority of other students completed their course work in the traditional semester time-frame,” he writes. “But working together, the leadership team, the administrators, and the teachers are solidifying the core belief that students deserve multiple opportunities to demonstrate their proficiency... By using time as a variable and frequently monitoring progress, the school has begun to drastically shift its culture by having teachers look for ways to help students prove proficiency and earn credits outside of adult-created time lines.”

“Giving High School Students More Time” by David Nagel in *Principal Leadership* (High School Edition), March 2008 (Vol. 8, #7, p. 29-31), e-link available to NASSP members only; Nagel can be reached at david.nagel@wayne.k12.in.us.

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4. Flexible Modular Scheduling – How It Works

In this *Principal Leadership* article, Wisconsin high-school principal Shannon Murray describes flexible modular scheduling, which was first introduced in the late 1960s. Although flex mod is used by only a handful of schools today, Murray believes it holds great promise for boosting student learning because it is more adaptable to learning needs. Here’s how it works.

Rather than carving up the day into seven or eight 50-minute periods or four 90-minute periods, flex mod divides the day into 21 modules, each 20 minutes long. These “mods” can be configured as 40-minute, 60-minute, or 100-minute learning blocks, and within those varying blocks, different group sizes can be formed:

- Large groups of up to 200 students for guest speakers, lectures, or other presentations; these large groups make much smaller groups possible.
- Medium groups of 20-30 students work with teachers on a particular topic or course;
- Small groups of 12-15 students for in-depth discussion and exploration of subject matter with a teacher;
- Unstructured resource time, during which students get extra help from teachers, get caught up in a class, participate in enrichment activities, or study independently.

As the schedule is being created, teachers decide what combinations of modules they need for each of their classes. Combinations of group size and period length make each day of the week quite different for students and teachers. Here’s a sample schedule for a ninth-grade student:

Monday: 7:50-8:00 – Homeroom
8:00-9:00 – English 9 (lab)
9:00-9:20 – Unstructured time
9:20-10:00 – Choir
10:00-11:00 – Geometry (lab)
11:00-12:00 – Unstructured time/lunch
12:00-1:00 – Science 9 (large group)
1:00-1:40 – French II (small group)
1:40-2:00 – Unstructured time
2:00-3:00 – U.S. History (large group)

Tuesday: 7:50-8:00 – Homeroom
8:00-8:40 – U.S. History (medium group)
8:40-9:00 – Unstructured time
9:00-10:00 – French II (medium group)
10:00-11:00 – Unstructured time/lunch
11:00-12:00 – Physical education 9 (lab)
12:00-1:00 – Geometry (lab)
1:00-1:40 – Choir
1:40-2:00 – Unstructured time
2:00-3:00 – Science 9 (lab)

Wednesday: 7:50-8:00 – Homeroom
8:00-9:00 – English 9 (small group)
9:00-9:40 – Unstructured time
9:40-10:00 – Choir
10:00-10:20 – Conflict
10:20-11:00 – Geometry (lab)
11:00-12:20 – Unstructured time/lunch
12:20-1:00 – French II (medium group)
1:00-1:40 – U.S. History (small group)
1:40-3:00 – Unstructured time

Thursday: 7:50-8:00 – Homeroom
8:00-8:40 – U.S. History (medium group)
8:40-9:00 – Unstructured time
9:00-10:00 – English 9 (large group)
10:00-11:00 – Science 9 (lab)
11:00-12:00 – Physical education 9 (lab)
12:00-12:20 – Lunch
12:20-1:00 – Geometry (lab)
1:00-1:40 – Choir
1:40-2:20 – French II (small group)
2:20 – 3:00 – Unstructured time

Friday: 7:50-8:00 – Homeroom
8:00-8:40 – U.S. History (small group)
8:40-9:20 – Science 9 (small group)
9:20-10:00 – English 9 (lab)
10:00-11:00 – Physical education 9 (large group)
11:00-11:40 – French II (small group)
11:40-12:20 – Unstructured time/lunch

12:20-1:00 – Geometry (large group)
1:00-1:40 – Unstructured time
1:40-2:40 – Choir (large group)
2:40 – 3:00 – Unstructured time

From his experience working with flex mod scheduling in two high schools, Murray lists several advantages:

- Students can take more classes, which allows them to take interesting elective and make up credits.
- To handle the unstructured time, students need to learn time management and responsibility, which serves them well in college and the workplace.
- In small classes, students can develop closer relationships with teachers and peers.
- Instruction is customized to each student's needs, creating opportunities for meaningful labs and off-site coursework.
- Flex mod gives teachers greater opportunities to team-teach with a colleague, teach interdisciplinary classes, and engage in professional development.
- Students and parents are very positive about flex mod
- Graduates invariably mention flex mod as the thing they cherished most when they were at the school and credit their academic success in higher education to learning how to manage "free" time and taking ownership of their learning.

"Flex mod is not a perfect system," says Murray. As the principal of a school using this kind of schedule, he's noticed that when things go well, people credit flex mod and when things go badly they blame flex mod. Here are the main challenges:

- If school leaders don't share the basic philosophy of flex mod, it's unlikely to succeed.
- There are few off-the-shelf software programs that can handle flex mod scheduling. In one 1,600-student high school that Murray was responsible for programming, a master timetable with almost 5,000 individual class phases had to be created each school year.
- The unstructured time is more challenging in terms of student attendance and accountability, and students who take advantage of the greater freedom need closer supervision. There has to be a staff consensus that giving students this amount of freedom is worth it in the long run.
- Two or three classes may overlap a day or two each week, which places the burden on students and teachers to work collaboratively to make accommodations (e.g., making up the time during unstructured blocks).
- Because flex mod is so new to many teachers, students, parents, and board members, there is a constant need to educate people about the philosophy and the nuts and bolts.
- A school must have an auditorium or large-group spaces for flex mod to work.

"Flex Mod Scheduling Redux" by Shannon Murray in *Principal Leadership* (Middle School Edition), March 2008 (Vol. 8, #7, p. 42-46), e-link available to NASSP members only; Murray can be reached at Shannon.murray@maps.k12.wi.us.

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5. A Marine Corps Officer Handles a Troublemaker

Bad managers play checkers; good leaders play chess. So says Russell Palmer (former CEO and business school dean, now consultant) in his new book, *Ultimate Leadership: Winning Execution Strategies for Your Situation* (Wharton School Publishing, 2008). Good leaders have to be strategic about helping people play to their strengths, he says, and tells a story from the Marine Corps.

When General P. X. Kelly was posted in Vietnam during the war, he became concerned about reports about a troublemaking young Marine. Other officers had tried to straighten him out, but without success. In an attempt to figure out what was causing the behavior, Kelly called the Marine aside and questioned him about his home and background. He was surprised to learn that the young man had trained as a classical violinist.

Kelly ordered his supply sergeant to procure a violin, and when it arrived, he put it behind his office door and summoned the troublemaker. “Son, how long has it been since you’ve played the violin,” he asked. A very long time, came the reply. “Then why don’t you turn around, and play me a tune?” The young Marine spotted the violin and his eyes filled with tears. He picked up the instrument with practiced hands and played a melody, and it seemed that his whole world had changed. In the weeks that followed, he was in constant demand to play at parties and other gatherings, and became one of the most popular men in his unit. And he became a model of discipline and good conduct.

“The Heart of Leadership” by Russell Palmer in *Wharton Leadership Digest*, March 2008 (Vol. 12, #5),

[http://leadership.wharton.upenn.edu/digest/index.shtml#THE HEART OF LEADERSHIP: Why Some Marines Need Violins, and Some Executives Need Lower Pay](http://leadership.wharton.upenn.edu/digest/index.shtml#THE_HEART_OF_LEADERSHIP:Why_Some_Marines_Need_Violins,_and_Some_Executives_Need_Lower_Pay)

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6. A Zero-Tolerance Policy on Drinking at High-School Sports Events

In this *Principal Leadership* article, Yorktown High School (NY) assistant principal Randall Glading describes how his school implemented a zero-tolerance policy to deal with intoxicated students at evening sports events. First, the principal went on the public address system and explained the policy, saying that because some students were making bad choices, all students would be monitored by school administrators, the school resource officer, and the Yorktown Police as they entered the football stadium, all travel coffee cups and other open containers would be inspected, and there would be serious consequences for violations. After the announcement, the principal and his two assistant principals talked about the policy informally with students, and a letter was sent home to parents.

At the first football game after the announcement, the administrators pulled aside two students who had glazed eyes and were chewing gum. A police officer administered a breathalyzer test, found they were drunk, and called their parents to take them home. These students were suspended for three days and had to attend three sessions with a counselor when they returned.

“The message was loud and clear,” says Glading. “We care about all of you, and will continue to monitor each game and ensure that you are making healthy decisions... Yorktown is a better place because of our zero-tolerance policy.”

“Practical Matters: Not on Our Watch!” by Randall Glading in *Principal Leadership*, March 2008 (Vol. 8, #7, p. 7-8), no e-link available

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7. Short Item:

Clear video explanations of wikis, blogs, and such – This website offers crystal-clear video descriptions of some Web areas that technology-challenged folks might appreciate. Check out <http://www.commoncraft.com/>. If you’d like to sample just one (on Wikis), click here: <http://www.commoncraft.com/video-wikis-plain-english>.

Many thanks to David Marshall for this link.

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Do you have feedback? Is anything missing?

If you have comments or suggestions, if you saw an article or web item in the last week that you think should have been summarized, or if you would like to suggest additional publications that should be covered by the Marshall Memo, please e-mail: kim.marshall8@verizon.net

About the Marshall Memo

Mission and focus:

This weekly memo is designed to keep principals, teachers, superintendents, and others very well-informed on current research and effective practices in K-12 education. Kim Marshall, drawing on 37 years' experience as a teacher, principal, central office administrator, and writer, lightens the load of busy educators by serving as their "designated reader."

To produce the Marshall Memo, Kim subscribes to 44 carefully-chosen publications (see list to the right), sifts through more than a hundred articles each week, and selects 5-10 that have the greatest potential to improve teaching, leadership, and learning. He then writes a brief summary of each article, pulls out several striking quotes, provides e-links to full articles when available, and e-mails the Memo to subscribers every Monday evening (with occasional breaks; there are about 50 issues a year).

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- How to change access e-mail or password

Publications covered

Those read this week are underlined.

American Educator
American School Board Journal
ASCD, CEC SmartBriefs, Daily EdNews
Atlantic Monthly
Catalyst Chicago
Commonwealth Magazine
Ed. Magazine
EDge
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Week
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Edutopia
Elementary School Journal
Essential Teacher (TESOL)
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Educational Review
JESPAR
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Language Learner (NABE)
Middle Ground
Middle School Journal
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Newsweek
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Principal
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Principal's Research Review
Reading Research Quarterly
Reading Today
Rethinking Schools
Review of Educational Research
Teacher Magazine (online)
Teachers College Record
TESOL Quarterly
The Reading Teacher
Theory Into Practice
Tools for Schools