

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SCHOOL

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- 1) research has documented what common sense has long dictated: that school leaders do determine whether or not schools are successful.

<u>success</u>	<u>vs</u>	<u>mediocrity</u>
a) clear goals		goal ambiguity
schools need to reach consensus on goals and priorities		
b) strong incentives for school improvement		weak or no incentives
who gets rewarded		
c) appropriate skills instructional leadership curriculum leadership staff development		lack of appropriate skills lack of leadership no in-service

When all 3 of the above are in place we see dramatic improvements in opportunity for all students.

The above is summarized from the magazine:

Educational Leadership
September 1987
Gordon Cawelti

The Effective Schools Movement

We all know that some schools are better than others. The effective schools movement now has evidence to tell us why school X is better than school Y.

We know conclusively that schools can have a definite impact of children's lives. Schools contribute substantially to students

progress and development. In the area of cognitive learning the school has been found to be much more important than background factors in accounting for variations among individuals.

* In measuring reading progress, for example studies show that the school is at times more important than the background of the student.

* Schools which are effective in promoting the progress of one group are also effective for other groups.

The crucial factor

- policies and processes which are within the control of the school principal and teachers.
- these factors can be changed and improved.

12 Key Factors in Effective Schools:

- 1) Purposeful leadership of the staff by the principal i.e. an involved active principal.
- 2) Involvement of the assistant principal who works on policy, and allocates teachers to classes.
- 3) Teacher involvement
 - participation in curriculum planning
 - involvement in decision of which class they are going to teach
 - teachers are consulted on policy issues affecting them directly.
- 4) Consistency among teachers.
Consistency in approach used by all teachers in a school has a good impact on student progress. Variation in value among teachers has a negative effect.
- 5) Structured sessions
The school day has a structure.
The students always have a lot to do.
Freedom exists within a definite structure.
- 6) Intellectually challenging teachers.
Teachers are enthusiastic, creative and intelligent
Teachers are problem solvers and encourage children to do the same.
Teachers who discuss and explain purpose of week

Teachers who have high expectations
Teachers who encourage response for managing individual
pieces of the work.

- 7) A work centered environment leads to a high level of industry,
and involvement. A high level of feedback is important.
- 8) Focus on particular curriculum areas.
This does not mean all students are doing the same work but
doing the same curriculum area.
Variation exists within choice of topic and level of
difficulty.
* Work is geared toward individual needs
- 9) Maximum communication between teachers and students. This can
be done in groups or individually
- 10) Record keeping -
used to monitor progress not to punish students
- 11) Parent Involvement
 - * helping in classroom, visits, meetings
 - * principal accessible to parents
 - * open door policy (informal)
 - * parent involvement at home (reading to kids, listening to
kids, providing books at home)
- 12) Positive climate
 - positive atmosphere
 - clubs, talking with kids, trips, visits, using the
environment as a learning resource

These 12 elements constitute a framework to review your school,
progress, class etc.

Effective school research is similar to effective organizational
research in general. Critical reflection of your own style - is
a must!

What does being a strong principal mean according to teachers.

- 1) The principle has a visible presence in the school and
classrooms.
- 2) The principal sets the vision for school - He or she has a
definite idea of what he or she wants his or her school to
look like.
- 3) A good principal gets resources to help their teachers
deliver.

- a) he or she knows what resources are available
- b) he or she is knowledgeable about the literature

What does being a strong teacher mean:

- 1) It does not mean being autocratic or authoritarian.
- 2) An effective teacher is one who can "empower" other people without being "bossy", paternalistic or authoritarian.
- 3) A good teacher like an orchestra leader - someone who keeps the group together making beautiful music.
- 4) A strong teacher has a keen understanding of curriculum and instruction
- 5) A strong teacher is respected for his or her ability to communicate one to one and in groups.
- 6) an effective leader spawns other leaders

Think about schools with high achievement and happy kids
look at what you find in those schools.

3 sets of schools

high profile (as seen by teachers)

principal is seen as strong
high expectation
monitoring of student progress
positive learning climate
goal clarity

low profile schools

the above are not present

Note: The actual physical school building and the budget per pupil are not primary determinants of an effective school.

* the quality of relations with human beings in the environment is the most important variable.

Since the principal is the one to set the tone he or she is the primary variable.

Does this mean a classroom teacher can do nothing without a good principal? No- for in the individual classroom the teacher is the key variable.

Rating of principal

Frames goals
Communicates goals
Evaluates
Coordinates curriculum
Monitors progress
Protects instruction time
Maintains high visibility
Provides incentives for teachers
Selects and participates in professional development
Provides incentives for learning

What do kids say about good principals and teachers:

- * they create and maintain a safe and orderly environment
 - * they enhance self esteem, a sense of responsibility and ability to get along with others
 - * they help students learn and grow academically
 - * they have high visibility vs hiding out in the office
 - * they make sure kids obey rules
 - they make sure kids get to class on time
 - * they are nice and caring
 - they take their time on the kids
 - they don't take advantage of kids
 - * they say hi/bye a lot
 - * they make sure the student feel recognised as a person
 - * they stop for brief chats, and remember names
 - * they settle disputes and govern discipline
 - * they are a good problem solver
- The least effective principal or teacher is simply a building manager running a smooth ship
- autocratic decision making
- process smooth school
- reactive, inconsistent

focus on student administration not kids

expectations vague

need for personal control and power

Successful principal and teachers

- high participation of others
- anticipates, initiates, and monitors
- uses a variety of strategies to involve others
- democratic but not laissez faire clear about and outcomes.