



THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

School principals have a challenging job that requires long working hours. (In larger schools, there may be an assistant principal to help carry the load.) On a given day, the principal may:

- Visit classes
- Conduct formal and casual teacher observations
- Meet with parents and students to discuss concerns
- Approve payroll and make budget decisions
- Oversee transportation and campus security
- Troubleshoot problems as varied as busted pipes to dealing with a failed delivery of crucial supplies
- Interact with school support organizations such as PTA or Partners in Education
- Attend an evening science fair or band recital

Remember getting sent to the principal's office when you were in school? Whether it was for talking in class or throwing paper airplanes, you likely learned very quickly that the principal was the boss of the school. That's still true! While the superintendent is in charge of the entire school district, the principal is in charge of the individual school campus.

Instructional Leadership

The principal's primary duty is to serve as the instructional leader of the school. In this capacity, the principal sets the school's educational goals and provides the resources to achieve them. Being the instructional leader is a fundamental undertaking that requires the principal to set specific objectives about how to improve learning and instruction and oversee curriculum development to reach educational excellence in the school. With the help of staff, the principal creates additional academic programs to enhance student achievement.

The principal's responsibilities also include:

Administration

The principal develops and implements policies, programs, activities, and yearly budgets. As chief administrator of the school, he or she also manages scheduling, facility operations, and security within the scope of all district, state, and federal policies and laws related to public schools.

Discipline management

The principal promotes a safe, orderly environment by making sure the students abide by school guidelines and code of conduct.

Hiring, supervision, and evaluation of employees

All school employees report to the principal, either directly or indirectly. The principal approves the hiring and evaluates teachers and staff and recommends disciplinary action or termination of employees when necessary. Additionally, the principal makes sure that teaching and professional staff receive ongoing professional development.

Communication

Much of the principal's role involves interacting with parents, students, teachers, professional staff, the superintendent, the school board, educational agencies, the community, and local businesses and organizations. The principal orchestrates schoolchildren's education experience at the campus level.