

Executive Director's Notepad . . .

Great Mentoring – A Measure of Your Leadership



From the desk of
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Throughout this edition of *The Pennsylvania Administrator* you will learn about exciting programs and techniques to provide mentoring opportunities for school leaders. Only through great mentorship do we produce great school leaders. Often the best mentorship comes from within the organization. It is provided by the existing school leaders during their everyday contacts and consultations with those new to the profession and one another. That's right! We all need mentors whether we are starting our careers or in the twilight of that career. It is only by having those around us who can challenge, encourage, consult, inspire and educate that we will continue to grow in our profession.

Have you ever noticed that some districts and schools produce a steady stream of successful school leaders who populate not only their own schools but schools throughout the state, while other places produce few or none? Why is this? The answer is simple – outstanding leaders nurture future leaders. They place future leaders in situations where they can observe and experience the powerful influence good leadership brings to a school, a staff and the lives of students. They provide future leaders with opportunities to experience leadership in action. And they “coach” future leaders based upon the individual's needs.

You can identify great schools by the availability and types of mentoring that goes on within them. If I were evaluating the effectiveness of my school and my self as a leader, one area I would concentrate upon would be the production of school leaders. It is an excellent measure of great schools and the leadership qualities that exist within them.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Who are the educational leaders within this school?
- What opportunities for leadership are they provided?
- What opportunities for leadership could they be provided?
- Do I see many perspective leaders in my school? Why or why not?
- Of the school leaders I have identified, what does each of them need from me to get to the next level?
- Can those I identified as school leaders identify additional leaders they work with?



This would be a good start in assessing whether your school is a “factory” of future leaders or a place with a glass ceiling defined by job descriptions and lack of opportunity.

A quick and easy beginning in this process of self assessment as a mentor would be by looking at your assistant principal (if you are fortunate to have one). An assistant principal whose days are filled with the wearing task of student discipline, without the opportunity to

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engage in curricular or other leadership testing activities, is a sure sign you need to work on improving leader development within your school. When you speak to your assistant what do you talk about? How are your assistant's activities preparing him or her for future leadership of a school? Discipline and event coverage are not fertile training grounds for a true school leader. You must create opportunities for your

assistant that enables him or her to actually lead groups and individuals toward meaningful goals. This requires patience, guidance and a willingness to give up some control, but it will make your school a better place, and in the long run, make your job easier and more rewarding. *Most principals were once great teachers – don't neglect the skill.*