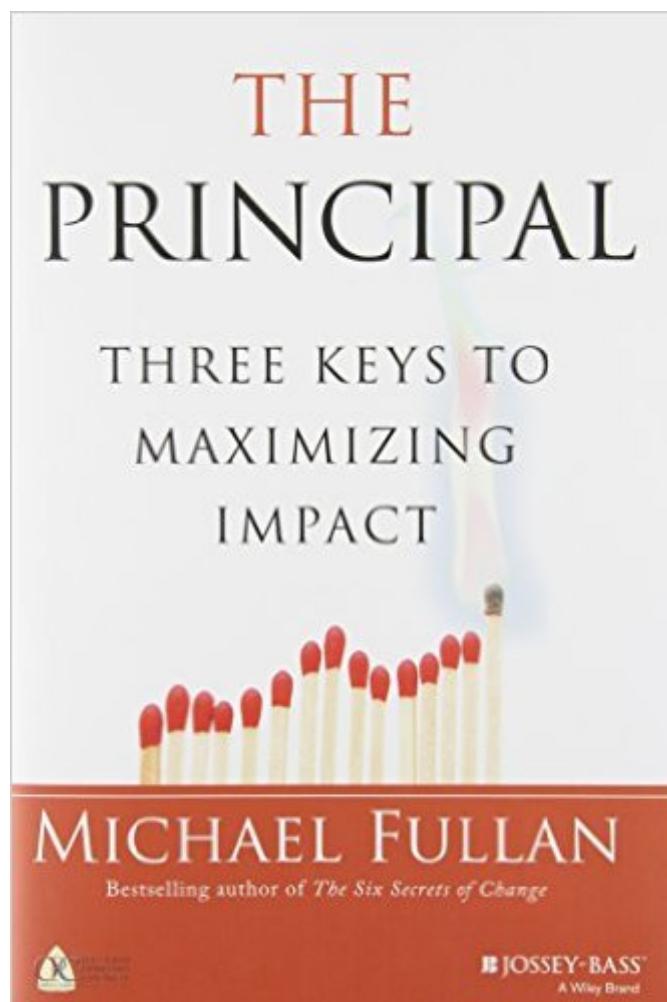


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The Principal: Three Keys To Maximizing Impact



Synopsis

The author of Six Secrets of Change describes how and why the principal's role must change to maximize student achievement *** FREE Professional Development Guide Included *** Principals are often called the second most crucial in-school influencers (after teachers) of student learning. But what should the principal do in order to maximize student achievement? One of the best-known leadership authors in education, Fullan explains why the answer lies neither in micro-managing instruction nor in autonomous entrepreneurialism. He shows systematically how the principal's role should change, demonstrating how it can be done in short order, at scale. Reveals the three key roles that administrators must play in today's schools Explains how to choose the right versus wrong drivers of school success Filled with "action items" to help implement Fullan's program effectively Includes strategies that have been successfully field-tested in schools across the United States and Canada

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Customer Reviews

After over a decade, policies relying on high stakes testing as a means to drive more effective teaching specifically and a better education generally have become embedded in public education. Fullan (2014) says we have gotten it all wrong. In his book, The Principal: Three Keys to Maximizing Impact, Fullan points out that these federal initiatives have failed to bring about extensive instructional change because they use the wrong policy drivers to try to change education. In other words, we simply arenâ™t getting the kinds of change we want in education because we are focusing on the wrong things to make that change happen. What should we be doing to maximize

impact on schools? According to Fullan, we need to reposition the role of the principal as overall instructional leader so that it maximizes the learning of all teachers and in turn all students (p. 6). To do this, Fullan indicates we need to focus on three key aspects of the principal's role: 1) Leading Learning, 2) Being a District and Team Player, and 3) Becoming a Change Agent. Beginning in "Chapter One Outmoded," Fullan describes both the current problem in education, and he introduces the idea of reconceptualizing the role of principal. According to Fullan, the current problem in education is that the "conditions for mutual learning have been seriously eroding" (p. 5). Students are increasingly bored and disengaged from schooling, as indicated by the fact that "schooling alienates two-thirds of kindergarten students by the time they reach ninth grade" (p. 5). Teacher satisfaction in their work continues to decline (p. 5). Even the job satisfaction of principals, who see their jobs as being too complex and too stressful, has been dropping since 2008 from 68% to 59% (p. 5).

The author contends that an early focus on accountability, individual teacher and leadership quality, and technology are the wrong drivers of school system improvement. They're more a part of the problem than a solution. This approach assumes professional capacity is already there - not always the case. Instead, we should 'reposition the role of principal as overall instructional leader so that it maximizes the learning of all teachers and in turn all students.' The current problem in education is that the 'conditions for mutual learning have been seriously eroding' - students are increasingly bored and disengaged from schooling - indicated by the fact that 'schooling alienates two-thirds of kindergarten students by the time they reach ninth grade.' At the same time, teacher satisfaction in their work declines, as well as that of principals. Fullan instead suggests that principals focus on building the professional capacity of the whole teaching staff, rather than that of individual teachers, while learning alongside them about what works and what doesn't. Another recommendation is that principals foster network connections outside the school but within the district to access new ideas, fostering intra-district development. Principals also should connect to external sources for innovative ideas. His third key for principals is that of 'Becoming a Change Agent' - starting with 'Challenging the Status Quo' (questioning common practices, taking risks, exploring innovations). The puzzling part in all this is that it seems to suggest that colleges of education have little to offer, and that educators are thereby condemned to playing out the role of trying to feel their way forward.

While this book is pulling on new reasons why a principal needs to change, it is pulling on old traditions to do it. Historically, a principal was a "principal teacher". They were often a leader within

the school that was looked upon as one of the best teachers within that school. They took on a mentor role and then led the school, teachers, and students while remaining one of them. Now, someone can be a principal without any experience within the classroom. They don't have to be good teachers to become a principal, and could have absolutely no tie to the school or district when they come on board. This book refocuses to those times where a principal was first and foremost a teacher. The first strategy is to be a lead in learning. The principal focuses on the entire staff and leads learning activities that has everyone grow together. By working with the entire staff, the students gain because a community and culture of learning is enhanced through the principal's leading process. Also, the principal shows that s/he is learning as well. This allows a cohesive bond to form throughout the school. Also, the principal is a person that builds networks. The principal allows for teachers to work together even if they are at another school. As a teacher, I enjoy this process. I've had one excellent principal that when I had a problem with something would know exactly what teacher within the district did that really well. She would then work with the principal from that school and that teacher to arrange for me to visit and watch for an hour or so. That gave me an example of what I could then do within my classroom. More principals should be able to do that for their teachers. Fullan's third key is to be a change agent.

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