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Opening Up to Your Internal Publics

Having positive, productive relationships with a school's publics requires, first and foremost, that school leaders understand who all of these publics are. It is amazing how many administrators, while trying to foster positive relationships, forget or leave out important school stakeholders. Equally surprising to many is the number of school administrators who mistakenly believe that all members of their school's community require the same efforts in relationship formation. There is an incorrect assumption in leadership preparation that leads people to believe in a "one size fits all model" of public relations.

These mistakes are due partly to the lack of training school administrators receive in the area of public relations. Although an admirable job is done in teaching leadership theory and organizational dynamics, administrator training programs often miss out on the opportunity to teach would-be administrators the differences in communicating with two distinct stakeholder groups—those inside the organization and those outside the organization.

The needs of stakeholders who spend most of their time outside of the school's walls, referred to as the external public, will be the focus of Chapter 6. For now, it is important to note that these people are vitally important to the success of any school. In fact, there are many studies that verify that the work of the external public (parents, businesses, community organizations, and members) has a significant impact on the achievement of students. For this and other reasons, the term "outside the organization" is not meant to be at all derogatory. It is simply used to delineate differences between those who do most of their work physically outside of the school building with those who spend most of their day physically inside of the school building.

In the not-too-distant past, it was not at all uncommon for school systems to concern themselves exclusively with communicating with these external publics. In recent years, however, school leaders have begun paying much more attention to engaging in effective two-way communication with their employees and their students—stakeholders known as their internal publics. There are three significant reasons why this shift in focus has taken place:

1. A strong system of external communication (discussed in Chapter 6) is dependent upon it.
2. Employees and students will be more productive because they feel listened to and appreciated and have some of their human needs being acknowledged and met.
3. Because school leaders are actually communicating with and listening to them, these internal stakeholders will make constructive suggestions that may have otherwise remained unexplored.

The best administrators, as this chapter will explore, engage in this internal communication through some more obvious, formal means of communication. They also do it, through less overt actions, such as modeling positive and enthusiastic behaviors.

The Principal as Role Model

According to a research study completed in 1999, many school principals fail to see themselves as role models for students. Although principals, by and large, see teachers in this capacity, there is a failure by many to understand that the behaviors and attitudes they exhibit on a daily basis have a direct impact on students, teachers, and staff members. As such, these principals miss out on opportunities to regularly communicate their beliefs and values to their school's internal publics. Worse than that, they often contradict their written and verbal messages by the behaviors and attitudes they exhibit on a regular basis. If they understood that their every move was being noticed and that they really did serve as role models, then perhaps these principals would focus much more heavily on the messages they inadvertently sent to their internal publics.

When school administrators understand that they are role models, they deliberately exhibit behaviors that are consistent with the mission and vision of their school. They begin, in essence, to "walk the talk." This modeling, research has shown, has a dramatic and immediate positive effect on the internal public of a school. It forces school leaders to focus less on their management responsibilities and more on their ability to lead. As we know, strong leadership involves modeling appropriate behavior. This occurs at a much higher level than merely giving directives and expecting them to be adhered to.

Scarnati (1994) listed nine behavioral rules for administrators that are most likely to promote success. They are as follows:

1. Practice honesty and integrity.
2. Work to eliminate fear.
3. Demonstrate care and understanding.

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4. Accept responsibility.
5. Develop a service mentality.
6. Develop loyalty.
7. Be flexible and adaptable.
8. Develop listening skills.
9. Practice humility.

These qualities are echoed in prominent research on leadership effectiveness. As Mark McCormack (1989) stated, "Few things in the world impress me as much as someone who does what he says he will do. Likewise, few things depress me more than someone who doesn't keep his word." Principal preparation programs often miss the opportunity to inform future administrators that these honorable character traits are essential to effective leadership. The principal as role model is a concept that is too often overlooked.

Buell (1992), who indicated the need for principals to develop shared vision, further referred to the need for school leaders to be seen as role models. As the author states, "For schools to be effective, they need effective leaders who express their values. These individual values must become shared goals so that the entire school community shares a vision" (p. 88).

It is impossible, therefore, for school administrators to avoid serving as role models to their internal publics. The individuals who constitute the internal public of a school, due to their positions on the inside of the school's walls, see the principal and interpret his/her body language, attitudes, words, and actions regularly. Failure to understand this concept is nothing less than failure to understand communication and the powerful influence it has on the effectiveness and success of the principalship. The facts are inescapable. Principals and other school administrators are role models, whether or not they wish to be thought of as such.

Visibility Is the Key

To model appropriate behaviors, to be seen as the keeper of the vision, and to communicate regularly and purposefully, school leaders must be visible to the internal publics of their school. Many administrators have interpreted this message to mean that principals ought to leave their office doors open to appear accessible. Having an "open door policy" helps, but it is clearly not enough. Expecting people to find the leader by walking through an open door, although better than asking them to pick the lock of a closed one, still leaves the responsibility for communication and relationship formation with the other people. School administrators, as role models, cannot afford to be so reactive. Being visible requires that the administrator walk through the open door out into the world where the internal public does its work. The

best school leaders utilize this visibility to their advantage by checking on problem students, conferring with teachers and staff, and monitoring the work of all members of their internal public. In this regard, visibility is not "one more thing to do." Instead, it becomes a means to an end. If the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, then this step is arguably the most important one for the school administrator to take. In short, to build relationships with students, teachers, and staff members, you have got to first get out of the office. This may be difficult at first, but it is an essential step of relationship building.

The Need for Effective Human Relations Skills

As school administrator preparation programs improve, there is an increased focus on the need for school leaders to understand and utilize human relations skills known to improve employee satisfaction. This increased focus, it is hoped, will lead to the prevention of an all-too-common mistake school administrators traditionally make; namely the assumption that the factors known to contribute to job satisfaction are the same ones that contribute to job dissatisfaction.

Frederick Herzberg (1975), founder of the Hygiene-Motivation Theory reminds leaders that job satisfiers and dissatisfiers are two separate sets of factors. The job satisfiers, or those that fall under the category of motivational factors, include achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth. When these factors are present in the work environment, then there is an increased chance that employees will be satisfied. From a leadership perspective, this tells school administrators that they must recognize the work of their staffs and students. Additionally, they must match the skills and talents of these individuals with the tasks at hand so that they may achieve, grow, and possibly advance. This will ultimately increase morale and improve the culture of the school due to the higher degree of satisfaction felt by the stakeholders.

On the other hand, Herzberg identifies job dissatisfiers, or hygienic factors. These include salary, working conditions, policy, status, security, and supervision. When these factors are present in the work environment, then employee dissatisfaction is prevented. These factors alone do not create job satisfaction. However, they lead to job dissatisfaction when they are absent. Again, from a leadership perspective leaders need to focus their energy on fostering and enhancing the job satisfiers. This will create the best opportunity for the leader to improve morale. While the dissatisfiers are important, improving them will not unilaterally make people enjoy their work more. A teacher is more apt to become satisfied at work when the principal recognizes

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her efforts, gives her appropriate responsibility, and assigns her work that she finds rewarding. The opposite is likely to happen when the leader simply increases the teacher's salary while ignoring these other motivational factors.

The Student as Internal Public

Among the many groups that make up a school's internal public, perhaps none is as important as the students. Yet, in our efforts at school improvement and educational reform, we often fail to consider the students in our decision-making. For example, consider the increased emphasis many administrators and teachers are placing on effectively involving parents in the educational process. School staffs are going to great lengths to discover ways that they can bring parents into their school and utilize them for the improvement of student learning. These efforts are often little more than glorified public relations efforts, but in other instances they are important elements of the goals and action plans of many of our nation's schools. Do they ignore the students, though?

There is an inescapable fact that is often forgotten in our quest to build parents' support for our educational efforts, though. Namely, the best way to get parents on your side is to get their children on your side. This concept, profound in its simplicity, seems to escape many school administrators. In an effort to focus exclusively on parent involvement they ignore the children, although the children are the best sources for increasing parent excitement and pleasure with the school. When students find school rewarding and when they believe that the adults working in the school building truly care about them as individuals, then they share this information and this enthusiasm with their parents. The reverse is also true, however. Students who do not find satisfaction or needs fulfillment at school tend to go home and complain about education. This can lead to a loss of parental support even before you have made any conscious effort to earn it. Somehow, school administrators need to become much more cognizant of the invaluable role that students play in advancing a school's mission. Students really are our most important stakeholders. We need leaders who can remember this and utilize this knowledge for educational improvement.

While it is widely recognized that the students represent the most important group among the internal publics, there are many school leaders who fail to understand how to appropriately involve and communicate with them. Too often students are seen as passive recipients of a school's goals, and not as members of a two-way communication process. They "listen" to announcements administrators make on public address systems, "read" memos written by counselors, school nurses, and administrators, and "write" notes based on their teachers' classroom lectures. While students may need to do all of these things to be successful, they may be even

more successful and confident if they have a voice that is heard from time to time as well. Visible leaders, it is worth noting, hear these voices much more readily than do those who find themselves chained to their desks. The same idea holds true for all school stakeholders. As a teacher, is it not more satisfying to know that the principal, superintendent, and/or board of education members give you a voice? Does this not lead to a greater sense of pride and ownership in decisions?

One of the ways for students' voices to be heard is through the formation of and participation in a Student Advisory Council. These councils, although their specific roles and functions vary from school to school, essentially create an opportunity for elected members of the student body to meet with administrators and discuss issues of concern to them. At a deeper level, they do even more than that. They empower students to assist in the governance of the school. Whether the issues they assist in governing are of major consequence or not is not nearly as important as the fact that the students are, at least, involved in the process. They have a voice. More importantly, they have a voice on issues that are generally of importance to them. Most importantly, this voice is not just listened to, but it is reacted to as well. The best Student Advisory Councils, therefore, give students opportunities to really participate in decision-making. The worst ones, which often do more damage than good, pay lip service to the idea of shared governance and are really little more than opportunities for the principal to listen to the students and then carry out the decision he or she intended to carry out from the very beginning.

SHOWCASE

Student Council Projects

Student Council projects can provide superior avenues for maintaining positive relationships with the immediate community. It is through such projects that external stakeholders can come to realize the giving nature of children and the school's commitment to providing for the community as a whole. Student Council projects can include such activities as fund-raising activities benefiting hospitals with large populations of terminally ill juveniles, ringing the bell annually for the Salvation Army, cleaning up the school grounds or other community facilities, and/or any other service oriented projects. Being involved in activities of this nature helps children develop a sense of social responsibility. In addition, the Student Council's interaction with the community helps cast the school in a positive light.

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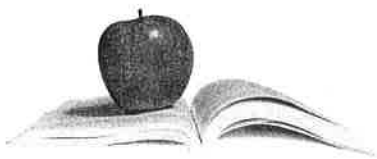
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Of perhaps even more importance are the steps that school leaders take to involve students and make them feel welcomed when they are new to a school building. These efforts are most notably used when students make the transition from one school to the next within a particular school district (i.e., the transition from middle school to high school) and when students are new to a particular school as the result of a move or family relocation. Times such as these provide great opportunities for school leaders to communicate with students and set a positive tone for their learning experiences. These are opportunities that the thoughtful administrator never wastes.

Exhibit 5-1 illustrates a flyer from a transition program that a high school may use to welcome all incoming freshmen. Note the encouraging language and the use of door prizes as two methods that really aim to encourage students' attendance.

For students who arrive at a school after the academic year has already begun, some schools provide a "Welcome Wagon" to greet and help familiarize them with some of the school's personnel and operations. At Parkview Elementary School in Valparaiso, Indiana, the welcome wagon is stocked with some necessary school supplies and organized and overseen by members

Exhibit 5-1 Transition Program Flier

<p>In cooperation with the Wilson HS Student Council</p> <hr/>  <p>You're Invited</p>	<p>Calling all incoming freshman! You are invited to a special event.</p> <p>Date: 8/22/11 Time: 9:00 AM</p> <p>Wilson High School Cafeteria</p> <p>Meet new friends! Familiarize yourself with new surroundings!</p> <p>Win Exciting Prizes!</p> <p>Welcome to Wilson High School!!</p>
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of the school's student council. Once a new student starts school, members of the student council bring the welcome wagon to the new student's classroom, some welcoming school supplies are given to them, and they receive a tour of the facility. During this tour, they meet staff members like the school nurse and secretary and receive instructions on issues of importance such as the lunchroom procedures and arrival/dismissal methods. Not only is this information of great benefit to the student who is new to the school, but it also empowers the student council members and provides them with a real sense of ownership and importance to the school. As we know, the students often know more about the ins and outs of daily school operations than do many of the adults who work in the school building.

The Use of Discipline

How a school deals with student discipline says a great deal about its method for communicating with students. While it is widely acknowledged that students must be well disciplined and well behaved in order to establish and maintain an effective learning environment, some teachers may take this notion to an extreme and communicate many negative messages to students.

The best educators know that students who become restless and inattentive often do not learn well and may disrupt the learning of other students. These educators regularly self-reflect and examine their own professional practices to prevent such situations from occurring. They understand that when such situations arise, the students are not always to blame. Consequently, these educators adjust their methodology to prevent discipline problems from arising.

Educators who are not so skilled make mistakes with discipline that often hurt their relationships with their students. Chief among these errors is the administration of inappropriate punishments that do not prevent future occurrences of the infraction that led to their administration, but alienate students instead. As an example, consider the numerous times in our schools that students are removed from the classroom because of inappropriate or excessive talking. This removal and isolation only serves to alienate the student from his/her peers. Rarely does it prevent excessive talking the next time the student is bored or feeling disconnected. From a school-community relations perspective, such mistakes lead to apathy from students and constant criticism from parents.

It is important, therefore, for school administrators to recognize that much is communicated to students by the establishment, maintenance, and follow through of their school staff's discipline efforts. It is not enough to think of pupil discipline as a classroom issue. Discipline plays a much larger role in the culture of a school. For this reason, administrators ought to carefully examine the ways in which they and their staff administer their discipline plans. They should help staff members understand the messages being communicated to students and their parents by the methods in which they deal with discipline.

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This is not to imply that discipline ought to be weak in a school. Nor is there any intent to communicate to readers that discipline should never be firm or even severe. The real issues are the consistency with which it is administered and the match between the punishments and the infractions. Students want fairness above many other things. Even if a school takes a very hard line on an issue such as student dress codes, it is the fairness of the policy and the consistency with which it is followed that are most important.

Teachers—The Most Important Adults in the Building

Although many believe that the principal is the most *influential* adult in the school building and is, therefore, the keeper of the vision, it is certainly commonly thought that the teachers are the most *important* adults in a school. They, more than anybody else, have direct, lasting influence on students and their achievement. As such, the responsibility that administrators have for working with and developing teachers is among the greatest responsibilities that they are charged with in the scope of their professional duties. Principals who understand how to communicate effectively with teachers are at a distinct advantage in this regard.

However, it is important to note that communicating effectively with teachers is only one part of the principal's job. Perhaps even more important in terms of school-community relations is the principal's ability to establish and maintain positive relationships with the entire school staff. Failure to do so can result in an unleashing of negativism that will severely damage a school's reputation as a caring, learning community. The importance of positive communication with non-instructional staff members is elaborated on later in this chapter.

Effective school leaders recognize that teachers often play a very active role in the community. For this reason, the teachers' overall opinion of the school can have a major influence on what the community learns to perceive and believe about the school. A teacher who is sitting in the stands at a little league baseball game complaining about the principal, central office administration, students, parents, or curriculum can do a great deal of damage to the image of the school. Often, the best intentions by the school administration cannot undo this damage. This adds to the importance of having a positive method of communicating with internal publics, particularly teachers. While they do not need to like everything, if issues are communicated carefully and reasonably, there is a much better chance that teachers and the rest of the internal public will at least understand everything. This will lessen the extent to which they may complain in public about aspects of the school. In fact, in the best schools, teachers are often out in the public bragging about the school. This proves that strong internal communications can have a very positive impact on strong external communications, which is elaborated on in Chapter 6.

The Friday Focus—A Tool for Positive Internal Communication

Todd Whitaker (1999) has developed a great model for communicating positive information to a school's internal publics. The *Friday Focus*, a weekly memo that is placed in all teachers' mailboxes before they arrive at school on Friday mornings, is designed with the following goals in mind:

1. It should communicate important logistical information about upcoming events in the school. This allows staff meetings to be much more productive.
2. It should be used as a staff development or in-service tool by consistently keeping the beliefs and vision of the school in front of the staff.
3. It should be used as a motivational tool by mentioning good, positive things about the school.
4. It can assist with planning. Because of the important logistical information contained in *Friday Focus*, staff members can be more organized and prepared about upcoming events.

The positive nature of the Friday Focus makes it a great motivational and modeling tool that the staff begins to look forward to each Friday morning. It gives the school leader an opportunity to communicate regularly, purposefully, and positively with members of the internal public in a way that keeps them motivated. Exhibit 5-2 is an example of a Friday Focus from an elementary school.

Positive Relationships with Non-Instructional Staff

It is very easy for school administrators to forget sometimes that non-instructional staff members are often even more visible in the community than are instructional faculty members. As such, regular, positive communication with them is of utmost importance. Equally important is making sure that these valuable members of your school community are recognized and feel appreciated for the work that they do.

Members of a school's non-instructional staff want to be acknowledged and praised just as much as teachers do. Unfortunately, in many schools this does not occur. Instead, teachers often treat non-instructional staff members, such as secretaries, teaching assistants, custodians, and cooks, as though they are socially inferior. It is up to the principal and administrative team to make sure that friendly, caring attitudes are shown to these staff members and that treatment as social inferiors is eliminated. This can be accomplished through activities such as including all staff members in faculty meetings,

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Friday Focus

March 19, 2010

- Kudos to Jim, Sheila, and Karen. This school has been impeccably clean lately. Though we all play a part in that, these three individuals have worked extra hard. Thanks for being so important to our school.
- I visited Brenda's classroom on Tuesday to watch her class perform their original play. The creativity these students displayed was inspirational. It couldn't have happened without the hard work and dedication of a great teacher. Thank you, Brenda!
- At a recent Annual Case Review the following comment was made to me by a parent, "The main reason my daughter has been so successful is the dedicated Elliott staff." Can you imagine how proud I was? Thank you all for the work you do on behalf of kids.
- Did anybody else go by the library yesterday morning? Sue's class was engaging in their third annual Teddy Bear picnic. I had never attended one before. Boy, was it fun! Your students are fortunate to have you, Sue.
- A heartfelt "Welcome Back" to Patti. Not only are we glad you're feeling better, but we've also realized how important you are to our school. Please don't get sick anymore. ☺
- I hope each and every one of you has a relaxing Spring Break! You've all worked so hard this year and are deserving of some quality time with your families. You'll be in my thoughts.

placing non-instructional staff members on important committees for which they have a stake in the outcome and possess some expertise in the issue, and providing social situations that involve the entire school staff.

In reality, the human relations needs of all staff members are similar. Whether one is a teacher, a secretary, or a custodian has little to do with the innate wants that people have in their work environment. The concern is that many leaders misunderstand these wants, and consequently, cannot meet them in work situations. Exhibit 5-3 represents a compilation of ideas taken from interview accounts with school staff and relying heavily on the motivation-hygiene theory, as described by Frederick Herzberg. Similar studies have been done in a variety of work environments, all of which produced very similar results. As

Exhibit 5-3 What Employees Want

Workers say they want:	Employers think they want:
1. Interesting and engaging work	1. Good pay
2. Appreciation for a job well done	2. Job security
3. Feeling that they are "insiders"	3. Opportunities for growth
4. Job security	4. Good working conditions
5. Good pay	5. Interesting and engaging work
6. Opportunities for growth	6. Loyalty
7. Good working conditions	7. Appreciation for a job well done
8. Loyalty	8. Feelings that they are "insiders"

shown, employer perceptions do not match employee desires. This is one major reason why some people in our schools do not feel satisfied at work.

It is clear from this illustration that school leaders do not always understand what it is that their staff members want to get from the work environment. As Frederick Herzberg identified, the things that lead to job satisfaction (motivational factors) are often not what we would expect. If school administrators, therefore, continue to believe that staff members want pay, promotion, and working conditions in order to feel satisfied with their work, then they will miss out on opportunities to provide the interesting work and appreciation that the staff members really desire. Additionally, administrators who lack this understanding will become very upset, believing that they have given the staff everything they could possibly want. In reality, as the staff members would surely feel, the administrator has given them absolutely nothing of real value.

Other Members of the Internal Public

Substitute Teachers

Substitute teachers, although providing an invaluable service when they are at the school, are often overlooked in a school-community relations program. There is a misguided assumption that these individuals are not part of the internal public, because they are not at the school on a regular, consistent basis. However, as the best administrators know, substitute teachers can also carry the message about their perceptions of a school out into the local community. Just as is the case with other employees, it is essential that the messages substitute teachers retain are accurate and positive ones about your school.

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One way to ensure that substitute teachers feel like part of the school's internal public is to invite them to an organizational meeting with the principal. This is best done before school opens for the year to help alleviate the difficulty that arises when they are substitute teaching in other settings. During this meeting, the substitute teachers should be reminded of the school's mission and goals, given copies of any handbooks that outline procedures or expectations, and engaged in a question/answer session about the school and its policies. In many cases, it is wise to include other key personnel such as the secretary, counselors, and nurse who can assist by explaining their roles to the substitute teachers.

Many schools have also developed a handbook for substitute teachers. This handbook contains information that the substitute teacher will need in order to be successful, but which is often overlooked or taken for granted as common knowledge by the regular instructional staff. Exhibit 5-4 on page 106 is an example of the Table of Contents from one such substitute teacher handbook.

Student Teachers

Schools that are located near colleges and universities that prepare teachers usually have pre-service or student teachers in their facility to complete the field component of their teacher preparation program. Many school leaders consider this location to provide wonderful opportunities to assist beginners in their development while potentially recruiting future members of their faculty. Teachers, in many cases, view the occasion to have a student teacher positively as they, too, enjoy assisting in the development of new teachers and enjoy the extra set of hands to assist in their classrooms. Due to the student teacher's involvement in the school on a regular basis, it becomes important that he or she is treated as a valuable member of the school's internal public.

Involving student teachers in all gatherings of the faculty is an important first step. School leaders need to remember that whether or not they hire these individuals after they complete their training, the student teachers will say a great deal about their experiences in these schools to other student teachers and/or to university instructors that will get out into the community. One of the best ways to ensure that positive things are being said is to make the student teaching experience as positive as possible for these individuals.

Orientation meetings, such as the one described for use with substitute teachers, are also excellent ways of making student teachers feel as though they are important members of the school's internal public. Additionally, these meetings give these pre-service teachers great opportunities to interact with other members of the school's internal public with whom they might not otherwise have regular contact. This, in turn, will aid their own professional growth and development.

Exhibit 5-4 Substitute Teacher Handbook

Richdale School Substitute Teacher Handbook

Table of Contents

Introduction and Welcome
Qualifications for Being a Substitute Teacher
Application
Certification
Getting Your Name on the List
The School Day
Assignment Times
Preparing for the Day
Reporting to Schools
Name Tags
Parking
Payroll Procedures
Roles and Responsibilities
Role and Responsibilities of the Substitute Teacher
Role and Responsibilities of the Regular Classroom Teacher
Role and Responsibilities of the Principal
Helpful Hints
Map of the School
Map of the District
List of Staff Names and Room Assignments
Bell Schedule
Lunch Schedule
Lunch Procedures
Journal Articles About the Importance of Substitute Teachers

The Importance of the School Secretary

School principals must always remember that the secretary is on the front line of communication. In many ways, this individual is the voice of your school. More than any other employee, the school secretary reflects the attitude of the principal to all stakeholders he/she comes in contact with. The way in which the secretary greets visitors, answers the telephone, interacts with teachers and other staff, relates with parents, and assists children is seen as reflective of the principal's values. For this reason, the secretary is a major figure in any school-community relations plan.

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Staff Members of the Week

Another outstanding idea shared with me by a colleague is to choose two staff members each week as your school's "Staff Members of the Week." Unlike some of the competitive prizes we often award to educators, every staff member should be eligible for this award. The two individuals chosen each week get to park their vehicle in the designated "Staff Member of the Week" parking spaces close to the school's entrance door. They also receive a coupon for the week that entitles them to one of the following:

1. Leave school early one day, as soon as the students leave.
2. Receive a "goody bag" (pens, post-it notes, candy, etc.)
3. Twenty-minute break from class with a planned activity for the students provided.
4. Free snack from the vending machine.

By the end of the school year, each staff member has had the opportunity to be honored. The staff truly appreciates the special attention they get and the feel of gratitude and admiration from the administration

School principals must always remember this and must regularly confer with the secretary to ensure that he/she is performing these public relations duties to the principal's satisfaction. Regular sessions dealing with topics from telephone usage to office decorating to interacting with students must be conducted to ensure that the secretary is representing the school in a positive way. Most principals believe that these human relations skills of the secretary are far more important than some of the more routine office skills. If the principals don't think this is true, you can bet that parents and community members do. A secretary with a negative attitude can cause irreparable harm to a school-community relations plan.

The Entire School Staff—The Key to Strong School-Community Relations

The smart school leader understands that the members of a school's internal publics are much more than simply employees. Because they live and vote in the school district as well, all of these individuals take on new importance as messengers of the good things happening in our schools.

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For this reason alone, all staff members must be informed of the extremely significant role they play in a school's public relations plan. Principals are well served to remind staff members at the beginning of each school year that there are many things they can do and many behaviors they can exhibit that will assist in the advancement of a positive school-community relations plan. These goals should be reviewed regularly so that all employees understand how important they are to the school's success in these endeavors. Some suggested public relations goals for all school staff members include the following:

- Always be friendly, courteous, and helpful to school visitors.
- Be active in community organizations and local service projects.
- Share any rumors that are being spread throughout the community about the school with the principal.
- Stay abreast of the actual facts regarding events in your school that may wind up being shared in the public.
- Share the great work that colleagues in your school are doing so that all community members you come in contact with are aware of the positive work being done on behalf of children.
- Always speak positively about your school in the community.

Consistently reminding all staff members of these goals will serve two very important purposes. First and most obvious, it will assist them in understanding how they ought to represent the school when they are living their lives out in the public. Second, it empowers them to play a significant role in the advancement of your school-community relations plan. This empowerment, more often than not, leads to an increased feeling of responsibility among the staff members. They begin understanding that the school leader recognizes their power and importance to the organization. This, as Herzberg has illustrated, often has the added benefit of leading to job satisfaction.

Chapter Summary

- School leaders must understand and pay attention to all of their school's internal publics.
- It is vitally important for school leaders to recognize that they serve as important role models to many members of their internal publics.

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- The best way to build relationships and show appreciation for people is to be visible to them on a regular, consistent basis.
- Students, often forgotten in our school-community relations plans, play a very important role in our school's success. They should be included in all of our public relations efforts.
- Teachers and other staff members carry many messages out into the community about our schools' effectiveness. School leaders must help all staff members realize this and learn how to best represent the school to other people.
- All employees of a school have similar human relations needs. As such, they must all feel important and be included in our school-community relations endeavors.

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

"Class" Parties

The teachers of Rocky Point Middle School are members of a close-knit professional community. Many of them socialize together outside of school hours, and they all seem to get along so well during the school day. As Rocky Point's new principal, you are excited about the opportunity to share some fun and fellowship with the entire staff at Rocky Point's upcoming staff holiday party.

As the party begins, you notice many of the teachers there, having a wonderful time together. You can't help but think how lucky you are to be the leader of such a collegial, professional group. Before long you begin to notice, however, that no members of Rocky Point's non-instructional staff are in attendance. Quickly you turn to Joe Nixon, veteran teacher and president of the local teacher's association. "Joe," you ask, "wasn't this party advertised as being for the entire school staff?"

"Of course it was," comes Joe's reply. "It's always only the teachers who come, though. The rest of the staff feels a bit inferior, you know with them not being professionals and all."

Your jaw drops in amazement. How, you wonder, could you have been so blind?

Questions for Analysis

1. What could have caused all members of the non-instructional staff at Rocky Point Middle School to believe that they were inferior to the teachers?
2. What ramifications, if any, could these feelings of inferiority among non-instructional staff members have on the school's perception in the external community?
3. What would you do when you return to school on Monday?