

Principal's Principles
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I have worked in education for forty-five years. When I considered my experience in terms of an extended qualitative study, I came up with a principal's principle for each of those years. My book by that title will be available soon through Xlibris.com. The Remembrance Principle is shared in its entirety and a summary of the other principles follow.

Remembrance Principle

Richard Lang was one of my favorite grandparents. He had two children in my school, Chase and Kendra Synder. Our paths first crossed at Warren Hawk's Barber Shop in Xenia, Ohio. Hawk cuts hair by appointment only and Richard often had his appointment either before or after mine. He was always telling jokes and enjoying life in general. He was enormously proud of his grandchildren.

One day from my office window, I saw him coming into the school building dressed in a bright yellow jacket and bronze-colored hat. Of course, I gave him a rough time about going out into public dressed like that. He told me that at his age he could dress however he wanted to.

We shared our usual bantering as he sat in my office and he made me put on his ridiculous hat. After that our discussion took a different turn. We talked about the war and how young men the age of his grandson were carrying guns and getting killed and how much of a waste that was of human life. He went on to tell me about his own war experiences and the atrocities that he had seen and experienced. I had to reach for my box of tissues before he was finished. It was a special time we shared because many veterans are reluctant to talk about these things. I guess it is just easier to bury them in their minds. Anyway, I got him to agree to talk to some of our social studies classes about patriotism and service to country.

Unfortunately, Richard passed away before he could fulfill that promise. I miss him.



Remembrance Principle – Invite war veterans to talk to your students before it is too late.

1. A Road Less Traveled Principle – You will spend a lot of time driving to and from school. Find a place to work where you can enjoy the journey.
2. Bean Queen Principle – Participation in community events fosters community support for the schools.
3. Best Friends Principle – After a student's death, his friends need to move on but they still need to remember.
4. Big Mamma Principle – School spirit is central to a positive school experience. Allow students to push the limits in developing school spirit but do not allow them to cross the line of impropriety. Allow your students to have fun, but limit the fun when it interferes with instruction.
5. Consistency Principle - Compassion is a great character quality of an administrator, but the administrator cannot rule with his heart if consistency is to prevail.

6. Daily Log Principle - Organization is everything. Determine what works best to keep you organized and on task and then perfect it to increase your efficiency.
7. Drama Principle - The creative talents of all the students in the school should have an avenue of expression.
8. Dress Code Principle – The school dress code is a necessary evil, without it, there is no telling how far the students will go in pushing the limits.
9. Feature Teacher Principle - Staff recognition is an important component of the principal's job. Teachers need to be appreciated.
10. Foggy Morning Principle – Put student and staff safety first. The daily schedule can be revised to accommodate a delayed start or early dismissal.
11. Fundraiser Principle – The best fundraisers are those that don't cost the school upfront money and they don't require the parents to purchase merchandise they don't want.
12. God of the Custodial Arts Principle – The non-teaching staff have a lot to offer the students, capitalize on their talents.
13. Bus Driver Principle – The best way to learn about the school district is to ride the bus routes with the drivers. Seeing where various students live gives you a perspective into their lives.
14. Great Depression Principle – A simulation is the next best thing to being there.
15. Hair Principle - Pick your battles. Hair length is not a battle worth fighting.
16. Halloween Principle - It is always best to say yes to a student request unless granting the request would cause a disruption to the educational process. Pick your battles wisely.
17. Haunted Church Principle - Help your students face their fears. They are preparing to go out into a world of terrorists and bad guys.
18. Headless Grinch Principle – There is much more to schooling than books alone.
19. High Five Principle - There is a spark of kindness in even some of the most ornery and cantankerous of students. The touch of the human hand can work miracles!
20. Humor Principle - Be extremely careful in the use of humor with students, staff and parents. They hang onto your every word looking for hidden agendas. Humor is easily misunderstood; therefore, it is best to play it straight most of the time to avoid being misunderstood.
21. Levy Principle - As much as possible, volunteer to serve only on levy committees that employ your talents and interests.
22. Memory Book Principle - The principal holds in his hand the opportunity to give the senior class a gift to last a lifetime. By taking time to collect news stories and memorabilia that are readily available, s/he can easily assemble a Memory Book that can be presented to the senior class president. The principal's act of kindness will be remembered many years after s/he is gone.
23. Morning Announcements Principle - There are a plethora of news release ideas every morning on morning announcements.
24. Nativity Principle – Adults are just like children. They need to be kept busy or their minds will wander. Twenty minutes is the maximum time you have to hold the attention of your staff during a staff meeting. Keep them actively busy or they will find something else to do.
25. News Release Principle –You can showcase your school to the world by posting your news releases on the school webpage. There are hundreds of stories that can be written in any one school year. Concentrate on academic news. Sports news will take care of itself.
26. Oleksandr Kushylun Principle – The school environment is greatly enhanced when foreign exchange students are enrolled.

27. Picture Principle – Things are not always what they appear to be.
28. Poetry Garden Principle - A garden is just like a group of students. Some plants do well on their own and thrive while the growth of others is stunted without watering, fertilizing and the proper soil conditions. Each individual student needs nurturing if s/he is to attain his/her greatest potential. Just like plants, some students do well on their own and thrive while the growth of others is stunted without tutoring, nurturing and the proper classroom conditions.
29. Polar Bear Principle - Students like to be self-challenged even if it pits them against the elements.
30. Principal's Advisory Principle - Talk to your students and develop a relationship with them. They can give you good advice about the dynamics of the school from the students' perspectives.
31. Remembrance Principle – Invite war veterans to talk to your students before it is too late.
32. Renaissance Principle – Students respond positively to external incentives, however, remember our ultimate goal is to get students internally motivated to do the right thing because it is the right thing to do.
33. Salad Line Principle – Students want to be actively involved in the operation of the school and are generally willing to help. All you have to do is ask them.
34. See You at the Pole Principle - Given the opportunity to express their faith at school, the students will express it in a responsible manner.
35. Senior/Freshman Principle - Pairing older students with younger students eliminates much of the intimidating situations for the younger students.
36. Senior Mural Principle - Sometimes it's OK to paint and write on the walls. Look for ways to encourage student creativity.
37. Sportsmanship Principle - Sometimes the best parents display the worst attitudes and behaviors at athletic events. Set the expectation with Athletic Directors and officials that inappropriate behavior from fans will not be tolerated. Remove misbehaving fans to make the point that sportsmanship from the spectators is indeed an expectation.
38. Staff Photo Principle - Displaying yearly staff photos in the teachers' lounge is a good way to document staff turnover, and it encourages camaraderie among staff members. Be sure to include support staff in the photo.
39. Staff Talent Principle - Capitalize on your staff's talents and interests outside the classroom. Some interesting student clubs can result when you do.
40. Student of the Month Principle – Student recognition is important for school morale and positive community perception. Monthly grade level selection of a student of the month provides a regular opportunity to celebrate positive aspects of student behaviors and accomplishments across grade levels.
41. Tractor Principle – Celebrate the unique character of your school and community.
42. Tradition Principle - Every community has certain traditions unique only to that community. It is best to embrace these traditions unless there is a hazard to the health and safety of the students or if the tradition can damage the reputation of the school.
43. Traffic Cop Principle - Having staff members visible during class changes prevents a multitude of problems.
44. Weed Walk Principle – You can take a fieldtrip on school grounds. Students need to learn about their natural environment.
45. Z-Prayer Principle - When times get tough, the tough pray. You can pray about anything and prayer will make a difference.

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