



## **ADMINISTRATION PILLAR : RESEARCH**

TIMETABLING FOR CONTENT AND CHARACTER

**Consistency, accountability, and sustainability are important roles that admins of any school need to keep in mind. Schools will typically have differentiated leadership, leaving administration duties on the backend supporting the main functions of the school, however its equally important to have the administration take up leadership qualities.**

### **WHY IS IT IMPORTANT**

Administration is typically relegated to the backdrop of a school's daily functions, relying on existing norms and protocols to keep the school's mission on track. Control is also a historically important trait for administrators; where students, staff and parents sometimes think of the 'headmaster' as an autocratic position which are perpetuated by the tradition of either the school, or the social and educational culture.<sup>1</sup>

While the nature and complexity of decision making for administrators cannot be reduced to a simple sequential list of tasks, there is some merit in looking back at these junction points and see what can be learnt from it. Drucker (1974) suggests the following steps for decision making<sup>2</sup>:

1. Define the problem
2. Analyse the problem
3. Develop alternative solutions
4. Decide on the best solution
5. Convert the decision into effective action

If we were to re-contextualize this for a more contemporary setting, number 4 can be introducing other members of the effected decision as part of the decision-making process on what's called co-creation. This way the other members are accountable and have a personal stake in the execution of the decision since they helped make that decision.<sup>3</sup>

Another component for administrators is to adapt to changing policy and national curriculum requirements. This can be achievement metrics for schools, new evaluation parameters for teachers, and

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infrastructural requirements for the next academic term. In this new changing paradigm, it's become even more important for administrators to take a front seat with school and classroom practices – since their knowledge and experience will directly impact the transitions school have to take according to their educational environment. This creates a well-oiled and critical component can allow the smooth daily function of the school.<sup>4</sup>

Recruiting, training and more importantly, keeping great teachers is also the responsibility of the administration. What makes a 'qualified' teacher however is subject to a lot of variables and disagreement. There are requirements mandated by state or federal norms, such as a degree, some type of certification and expertise in the relevant subject field. There is also the understanding that a teacher with a commitment to reaching out to students, and a deep understanding of teaching is more important than subject matter – which can be learnt over time. There are 3 broad categories why teachers choose to leave, their own qualification, teachers in difficult roles and young and inexperienced teachers.<sup>5</sup>

This can be addressed by identifying what your school has to offer to different types of teachers. For qualified teachers, career opportunities, decision making roles and transparent pay scales. Providing opportunities of mentorship for young or inexperienced teachers can help them feel like they can grow in your institution.

Getting things done in the school requires the combined co-ordination of all the stakeholders responsible, taking all the resources an institution has at its disposal and communicating that effectively to make sure tasks – and more importantly – purpose is clearly defined. Achieving these goals mainly fall on the responsibility of the administrators, and more often than not, communication becomes a key factor in why most schools are unable to align to a common larger order purpose. Creating and supporting a strong sense of culture is paramount to good and effective communication. "If the communication system in a school is open, an atmosphere of trust, reciprocity, intimacy and growth is built thus giving room for effective teaching and learning."<sup>6</sup>

That being said, a culture of good communication does not exist by default, and must meticulously be created and sustained – as unfortunately, school environments can be equally toxic for students and teachers alike. School principals and administrators can – and have – mentally, emotionally and physically abused teachers. This not only affects the working relationship between the administrator and the teachers, but also between teachers and their students.<sup>7</sup>

There is no one central role for an administrator, but fundamentally administrators are decision makers, and in being so, they facilitate the work of the staff and members of an educational institute. It is however important to underpin those decisions on an ethical grounding, can they make decisions fairly and

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democratically, justly and humanely? A big component of why some administrators fail in their role and their prestige can typically be classified into 2 brackets, inefficiency or inequitable. When seen as unfair according to peers, administrators can still make decisions, but quickly lose the likelihood that decision will be carried out by fellow peers. Good administration is ethical decision making as well.<sup>8</sup>

Research also suggests that teachers prefer administrators with a value and support based guidance than that of task and processes. Informal behaviours and interventions between administrators and teachers lead to more appreciation, trust, cooperation, respect, and motivation to continue their work. Principles that are more sensitive to the immediate needs of the daily functionalities of teachers have more positive buy in from staff as well. A communication model centred around support as its primary function leads to better teacher wellbeing and lower attrition, which is why it's so important to design processes keeping communication in mind.<sup>9</sup>

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