



YOUR SECRETARY



***"No one who achieves success does so without acknowledging the help of others.
The wise and confident acknowledge this help with gratitude."
– Author unknown***

The workload for building administrators continues to increase placing additional stress and pressure on the Principal's Secretary. In many cases, a secretary who can effectively support the work of the Principal can save a busy administrator 10-20 hours per week. Communication and putting systems in place can make this a very cohesive relationship. Consider these items:

Communication: How do you like your calls screened? Do you prefer phone and other messages on paper, e-mailed or texted? Do you have an open door policy for all who wish to talk to you or do you prefer scheduled appointments? Have a discussion about your expectations for customer service, professionalism and confidentiality.

Mail: Do you like all mail – except items marked confidential – opened and in a tray? Would you like obvious solicitations taken out? Talk about what you prefer. Also create an outgoing tray on your desk for items that need to be copied and distributed to staff, things that need to be sent via interdistrict mail and for outgoing mail. Use your outgoing tray for basic tasks such as: "need 100 copies of this for Monday."

Calendar Management: Your best bet is to use a common electronic calendar in your email package or via Google calendar that is synced to all of your devices (phone, ipad, laptop, etc) and that your secretary can access. Provide your secretary with direction on how early/late you prefer to have appointments available for parents/staff. Have all appointments run through your secretary – this will help you avoid setting up appointments during hallway discussions, which you always forget to add to the calendar by the time you return to your office. Give your secretary a list of your evaluations, district meetings, and conference/county meetings to put on your calendar with times and locations. Have your secretary put a printed copy of you weekly/monthly calendar on your desk every Monday. Calendar management alone can save you hours each week.

Weekly Systems: Have your secretary create templates for all weekly communications in your shared file – such as your staff bulletin and administrative team meetings – two weeks in advance so that you can edit and add to the agendas as items come up.

Week Ahead/Month Ahead: Plan to meet with your secretary every Monday for week ahead/month ahead discussion. Use the building calendar to review parent, student and staff activities that will require planning and communication. This will help to prevent avoidable last minute panic.

Website, Twitter & Facebook: Who maintains and updates these important communication items? Consider having at least four "administrators" of the sites – you, your secretary, the media specialist (a.k.a. librarian) and the athletic director are good options. All four should have rights to post daily announcements, changes in programming, emergency information and all other events, as well as to monitor and edit these daily communication spaces.