Surviving and Thriving as a New Principal:
Discussing What it Takes to be Successful as a New Principal Through a Narrative Approach

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Abstract
One often overlooked aspect of school success and student achievement is the vital role of the school principal. While much of the education reform conversation focuses on topics such as accountability, school-family connections, and individual teacher practices, it is the principal who ultimately impacts each of these areas and who can be the driving force behind school growth. Considering this, current high rates of principal turnover are troubling as this may impact many schools across the country. If a principal is to have a positive impact on a school community, it will take a long term effort, and for this to happen, we have to ensure that new principals have the right strategies and tools to lay a solid foundation for their work and are able to get off to a great start. This dissertation attempts to add to this discussion by sharing the stories and experience of other principals who have been able to survive and thrive as new principals. The job of a principal is extremely complex, but by using the power of story to provide real, relevant examples of how actual practitioners have done things, we can help to provide new principals a document that they can use to shape their first year on the job. In this dissertation, stories from successful principals have been analyzed and formed into a framework, The Three S’s of New Principal Success: Stakeholders, Systems, and Self, that is easily remembered and applied.

Defense of Dissertation Committee
James V. Shulis, Ph.D., Chairperson
Tom Hoerr, Ph.D.
Patty Corum, Ed.D.