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Calm during crisis: school principal approaches to crisis management during the COVID-19 pandemic

Maya Kaul
University of Pennsylvania

Bryan A. VanGronigen
University of Delaware

Nicole S. Simon
City University of New York

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Calm during crisis: school principal approaches to crisis management during the COVID-19 pandemic

Abstract

Principals formulated their responses to the pandemic in terms of a hierarchy of needs: they understood that their students and staff had to feel physically and psychologically safe before they would be successful in the classroom.

This is one of a series of briefs that focused on a 'critical incident' surrounding school closure and offers pragmatic suggestions to educational leaders as they continue to grapple with the disruptions of the pandemic.

Disciplines

Education

RESEARCH BRIEF



Calm During Crisis: School Principal Approaches to Crisis Management during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Principals formulated their responses to the pandemic in terms of a hierarchy of needs: they understood that their students and staff had to feel physically and psychologically safe before they would be successful in the classroom.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented an unprecedented crisis for schools around the world. Caught in the eye of this storm, school principals have been responsible for leading their schools through this crisis. This brief highlights the challenges that principals identified as most pressing in the early days of the pandemic and how they acted in response.

The story that emerges from our data is that principals formulated their responses to the pandemic in terms of a hierarchy of needs: they understood that their students and staff had to feel physically and psychologically safe before they would be successful in the classroom. Even after these basic needs were addressed, principals faced overwhelming logistical hurdles of ensuring technology access and establishing clear communication streams.

AUTHORS

Maya Kaul

University of Pennsylvania

Bryan A. VanGronigen

University of Delaware

Nicole S. Simon

City University of New York

ABOUT THIS STUDY

Leading in Crisis documents school and district experiences following school closures in March 2020 due to COVID-19.

From April to August 2020, researchers conducted interviews with a diverse sample of 120 principals in 19 states, including elementary, middle and high school leaders from urban, suburban, and rural areas across the U.S. The interviews asked about the most pressing issues leaders faced; school and district responses; the inequities exposed by the pandemic; and strategies for care and well-being.

To write their brief, teams of 2-4 researchers analyzed a sub-sample of between 23-43 of the interviews (depending on the team size) to arrive at their conclusions and recommendations.

The full study is described at the back of this brief.



For most principals, and especially for those working in economically fragile communities hardest-hit by the pandemic, instructional matters took a backseat. In this brief, we dig deeper into four key themes that emerged from our conversations with principals across the nation, and draw implications for policy and practice.

A priority on basic needs.



Across the diverse contexts we studied, the first question that principals asked was: “Is everyone okay?” Particularly when other aspects of the pandemic felt outside of their control, principals saw it as their responsibility to “keep a pulse on [their] community” and be their “safe haven.” This manifested in principals focusing on the well-being of their staff and of their students and families.

Staff wellbeing. Staff members were attempting to manage their work while they themselves were getting sick, taking care of their families, and adapting their teaching to the online context. As one Tennessee principal explained, “My teachers need as much support as our kids do sometimes, just to talk them off the ledge saying ‘It’s gonna be okay.’” Teachers across the nation were already feeling a significant drop in

their sense of success in the classroom during the pandemic.¹ As such, principals understood that building a safe and trusting working environment for their staff was critical in responding to the broader needs of their school community. For example, one Georgia principal poignantly shared the ways in which the pandemic affected her staff:

We just had to come up with different ways to try to keep people sane and happy, because this thing was scary. As the numbers were going up, I could just see everybody’s face, everybody was so stoic. Like, what in the world? Nobody knew what was going on.

Student and family wellbeing. Attending to student and family wellbeing was most complex for principals working in high-poverty contexts. In one urban Texas school with a historically high student mobility rate (80%), the principal’s first concern was “just being able to locate” students. In such communities where students and families were experiencing homelessness or facing housing insecurity, principals played a direct role in coordinating access to food and rent relief. As one Boston principal shared:

We had some students, older students – 18, 19 [years old]—on their own. And they’re living in a bedroom and they’re getting evicted. Whatever it is—they might be paying \$400 a month for that room. Whatever it is. We tried to help them out. It was tough for everybody.

Across our sample – from New York City to Southern California to rural Montana, principals and their staff often described going door-to-door to drop off basic necessities, including food, toiletries, diapers, and even

1 Kraft, M.A., Simon, N.S., and Lyon, M.A. (2020). Sustaining a Sense of Success: The Importance of Teacher Working Conditions During the COVID-19 Pandemic. (EdWorkingPaper: 20-279). Retrieved from Annenberg Institute at Brown University: <https://doi.org/10.26300/35nj-v890>.

cash support food to families. In some cases, principals were able to collaborate with local organizations and nonprofits and tap into existing services. One New York City principal noted:

We connected families to soup kitchens and food dispensaries, and also we raised money to give cash allotments that we give to families. We worked with community-based organizations to raise money to be able to give families money to live and eat.

In higher-income contexts, principals faced these sorts of challenges much less frequently.

Technological needs to access teaching and learning.



Although many states and districts called for schools to pivot to online instruction, these plans failed to address wide disparities in community access to technology and the Internet. Consequently, principals contended with the challenges of ensuring their students and staff had basic access to Internet and technology, and then of designing their instruction to serve their students.

Ensuring access to the Internet and technology.

Scores of principals developed plans to coordinate the distribution of hundreds of computers. Other principals independently reached out to Internet service providers to request free Internet hotspots or advocate for discounted billing for families in need. One principal leading a school on a Native American reservation in Montana reflected on the barriers they faced in procuring a deal with local Internet providers,

leaving them to create an “Internet hub” for their community in their school parking lot:

Because our community didn't have the Internet access other communities have. [...] I approached our local providers. [...] They want their private business, but I said, 'Look, I know for a fact in these White towns you're providing Internet and you provide Chromebooks to these schools.' And I'm just here to say, 'Do that in my town.' And it became a contentious situation. So what I did was made my school a hub for high schoolers.... And so they could come park around here and jump on the Internet, do their homework. The company won't do it, so I did it.

Other principals shared that some of their own teachers did not have Internet access at home, which only complicated efforts to organize instruction. In many areas around the country, it took several weeks to distribute computers and set up Internet access, which delayed some transitions to online-learning until mid to late-May—a full two months after the early onset of the pandemic.

Ensuring equity in instruction, despite inequities in technology access. In addition to the instructional challenges of bringing teaching and learning online, many principals contended with inequitable student and staff access to technology. According to an April 2020 Pew survey, “roughly one-in-five parents with homebound

schoolchildren say it is very or somewhat likely their children will not be able complete their schoolwork because they do not have access to a computer at home.”² In the schools we studied here, principals similarly found themselves choosing between offering higher-quality instruction that only a subgroup of students would be able to access (due to student working hours, home conditions, and/or lack of Internet access), or offering potentially lower-quality instructional options that all students could equitably access. As one principal in New York City said:

The big debate that everyone was having, not just at our school, but throughout the City and probably throughout the country was, ‘Can you have synchronous stuff when it’s unfair that some kids can’t access it?’

On the other hand, schools in higher-income contexts often had existing infrastructure to lean on to make this switch, such as a 1:1 teaching environment where all teachers and students already had their own Internet-capable devices that they took home with them each night. One San Diego principal shared that their school’s existing infrastructure—made possible by parent donations — eased their transition to online learning:

The demographics of this community are middle to upper middle class, a fairly well-to-do community, and so we have a lot of programming because of the generosity, with our parent donations. [...] So every single student has an iPad, every teacher has a MacBook and an iPad. And so we have been able to launch a lot of digital curriculum over the past five, six years. [...] So our transition was, I would say, not seamless, but it was very... It was very manageable. [...] We had done the work, and so we were ready to go.

Schools like this were able to get a jumpstart on adapting their instructional practices and launch remote learning in late March or early April, and there was less variation in the quality of their students’ learning experiences.

The need for consistent, multimodal modes of communication.

A key aspect of principals’ work in caring for their communities and meeting the basic and technological needs of their staff and students was creating and expanding their modes of communication.

Leaning on existing communication structures. Principals believed that one of their key roles during the crisis was to provide information to their communities. In the words of one principal, this was a “new function” of the school during the crisis, and it was an “all hands on deck” operation to reach students and their families. Principals led their communities by coordinating a coherent communications strategy, engaging nearly all members of the school community — far beyond just guidance counselors, social workers, and parent coordinators.

To provide this information, principals frequently tapped into existing communication infrastructures, such as automated phone calls, text messages, or weekly email newsletters. For many, however, this infrastructure was insufficient, so they increased both the frequency of communications and the methods they used to communicate, and involved other staff to help reach students and families. Principals reported benefiting

² Pew Research Center, April 30, 2020. “53% of Americans Say the Internet Has Been Essential During the COVID-19 Outbreak.”

from school structures, such as advisories, because they were able to have staff, who had already built trusting relationships with students, lead outreach efforts to those students and their families.

One Florida principal, for example, started sending out near-daily updates, noting that, “because information was changing, you couldn’t wait until Friday or they would miss a week.” A Minnesota principal made the shift from weekly email newsletters to short videos, saying:

I’m tired of writing an article and knowing that it’s not getting read. [...] I don’t have time to read my own kids’ stuff, but while I’m driving, I can play the video. And so I started doing that. [...] We would get 400 hits on it on YouTube, so people were watching it.

Establishing new modes of communication. Principals also shifted their modes of communication. Recognizing the lack of Internet access in his community, one Montana principal utilized radio as his primary means of reaching the school community. A principal in Pennsylvania lacked previous experience with social media, saying, “I’ve never done YouTube videos, [so] I learned how to do YouTube.” With these new skills, the principal then worked with staff members to “blast things on social media” and “get [messages] up on Facebook.”

Another Connecticut principal hung signs with school announcements at local businesses, so as to reach as many families as possible:

I did a couple of home visits myself, making my phone number available, and then I also posted signs around the building with numbers from where they could get information. So any time I sent a school messenger, I would also type it out and put it on the doors around the building so that people could see it. [...] There’s four like bodegas around the area, so I wasn’t sure whether they were gonna be closed or not, so I made sure that they had my phone number, asked them if I send the messages, could they put them up on the board? Just try to find ways to make sure that I was gonna be able to stay connected.

Principals went to great lengths to reach their school communities because they understood the stakes were monumentally high. As one San Diego principal reflected, “If we don’t do it, who’s gonna do it?”

An instructional focus on social and emotional learning.

Only when principals addressed the non-instructional aspects of their work could they shift their focus to the instructional core. As one Minnesota principal reflected, “[Our students] have what they need to feel safe and supported. Any learning that comes after that is a big bonus at this point.” Once schools were able to focus on instruction, principals saw heightened value in social and emotional learning, but encountered some challenges incorporating that sort of instruction online.

Seeing the value of social and emotional learning. In some schools, the switch to online instruction prompted audits of curriculum, instruction, and assessment with teachers choosing to preserve only those lessons that were the most engaging. For example, one Colorado school district recommended that principals and teachers focus their efforts on the district’s four “key competencies”: communication, collaboration, self-directedness, and flexibility. A principal in the district remarked that foregrounding these competencies

shifted teachers' role from serving as "the curriculum police" to having the space to develop high-quality lessons targeted both students' academic and social and emotional learning. The rest of class meeting time was spent on building and maintaining relationships and community. Similarly, one Minnesota principal shared that their school had committed to engaging in "a 10-minute connection with every child, every family, every day."

Adapting social and emotional learning to the online environment. The switch to distance learning, however, presented a challenge for some schools, who relied on their previous modes of social and emotional learning. When asked what her student's greatest challenges, a Colorado principal explained:

I think struggling without the in-person—just being at school—the rituals and routines piece of it, being able to play with their friends. [...] They're getting really wonderful instruction from their teachers, but they're missing out on those key components of learning, like the turn-and-talk, the collaborative experiences, the critical analysis of each other's answers, and I really do think that social-emotional piece is key.

This approach to learning required educators to be more "patient" and "flexible." Principals of some middle schools, for example, said the pandemic charged students with taking greater ownership over their learning. Self-direction was no longer something mostly for high school-aged students, they argued. One middle school principal, in fact, observed that "students are finding ways to access education and educate themselves." These advances raised the bar even more for educators to coach students on key social and emotional skills, alongside subject area content and skills.

Implications

As principals across the United States led their schools through the sudden pivot to online learning at the start of the pandemic, they faced immense challenges. Those leading schools in high-poverty contexts faced magnified challenges, especially in the geographic regions hit hardest by the pandemic. In line with prior research on school leadership, principals who led through the onset of the pandemic recalled enormous responsibilities that extended far beyond the strictly "academic" work of schools. In partnership with teachers and other staff, they became "first responders in tragedy"³—focusing first on the basic health and psychological needs of their school community—and only later having the ability to focus on instructional matters.

This response is well-grounded in previous research, which shows that students can only fully cognitively engage with instruction when they feel physically and psychologically safe.⁴ Principals understood learning as social, emotional, and academic, and calibrated their school responses to the pandemic.

Although what one principal described as the "instant distance from the kids" made every aspect of the pandemic response a challenge, principals who had built a culture of trust among teachers, staff, students, and families were able to leverage existing structures to better support their school communities. As one principal said, "when you trust the people you're working with... [it is] easy... to work together to make things happen."

3 O'Toole, V. M., & Friesen, M. D. (2016). Teachers as first responders in tragedy: The role of emotion in teacher adjustment eighteen months post-earthquake. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 59, 57–67.

4 Darling-Hammond, L., & Cook-Harvey, C. M. (2018). *Educating the whole child: Improving school climate to support student success*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

Calm During Crisis: Principal Approaches to Crisis Management During the COVID-19 Pandemic

As the 2020-2021 school year unfolds, it is clear that principals will continue to lead their school communities through an ongoing crisis. It is critical that principals and their staff are more actively protected from “role overload” precipitated by crisis. Students are expected to lose considerable academic ground—a problem most severe in the least resourced communities⁵. Schools alone cannot make up for broken and inequitable healthcare and housing systems, and schools cannot be charged with rescuing students and their families from the severe economic chaos that is rapidly spreading across the country. Principals need support from municipal and district leaders in shifting the focus away from what Heifetz and colleagues call “technical problems”—those challenges that “have known solutions that can be implemented by current know-how” (p. 19).⁶ Easing the process of addressing technical problems can allow principals to focus their limited time and energy in solving “adaptive challenges”—those that require leaders to “build new ways of being and responding beyond the current repertoires of available know-how” (p. 2).

At a time when every aspect of schooling has been upended, it is critical—now more than ever—to “clear the muck” of the many logistical challenges principals are facing so that they can zero in on the instruction. The unique value-add of schools and their leaders must remain on educating the next generation.

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5 Kuhfeld, M. & Tarasawa, B. (2020). The COVID-19 slide: What summer learning loss can tell us about the potential impact of school closures on student academic achievement. NWEA.

6 Darling-Hammond, L., & Cook-Harvey, C. M. (2018). Educating the whole child: Improving school climate to support student success. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

BIOGRAPHIES

Maya Kaul (mayakaul@upenn.edu)

University of Pennsylvania

Twitter: @kaulmemaya

Maya Kaul is a PhD student in Education Policy at the University of Pennsylvania, where she is a William B. and Roberta V. Castetter Fellow. Her research draws on organizational sociology to consider the role of policy in elevating the status of teaching as a profession. Previously, Maya has served as a Research and Policy Assistant at the Learning Policy Institute and as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Helsinki.

Bryan A. VanGronigen (bvg@udel.edu)

University of Delaware

Twitter: @VanGronigen

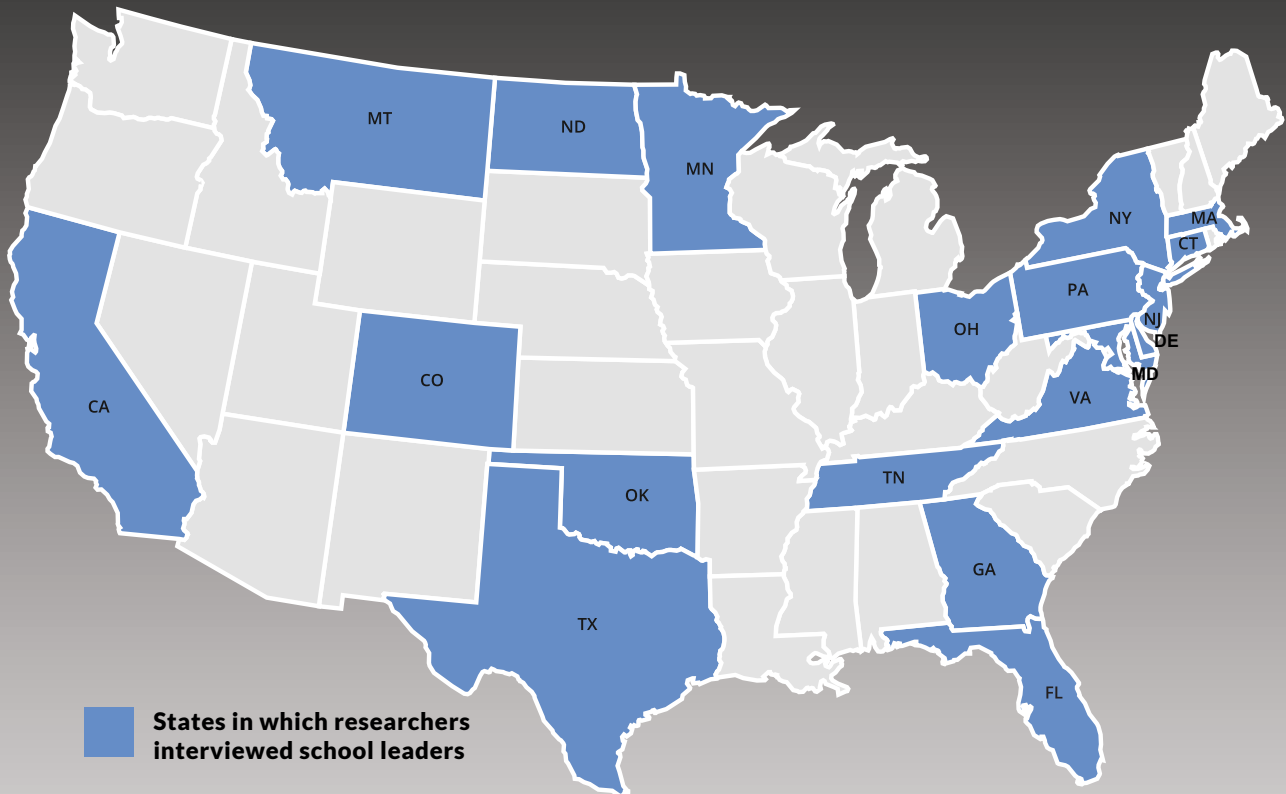
Dr. Bryan A. VanGronigen is Assistant Professor of Education specializing in Educational Leadership in the School of Education at the University of Delaware. His overarching research focus is on organizational resilience and change management in K-12 schools with specific interest areas in school improvement efforts, the preparation of educational leaders, and educational policy analyses. Prior to completing doctoral studies, Bryan was a middle school and high school social studies teacher, department chair, and school leadership team member.

Nicole S. Simon (nicole.simon@cuny.edu)

City University of New York

Twitter: @Nicole_S_Simon

Dr. Nicole S. Simon is a University Academic Affairs Director at CUNY and a research affiliate with Harvard University's Project on the Next Generation of Teachers. Simon earned her doctorate at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She served as a Harvard Presidential Public Service Fellow at Boston Public Schools and as a Radcliffe/Rappaport Policy Fellow at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Simon began her career in the New York City Department of Education. She is the author of book chapters and articles published by Teachers College Record, Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, and Harvard Education Press.



Leading in Crisis

Leading in Crisis is a series of briefs that document school and district experiences following school closures due to COVID-19.

Friday the 13th is always an ominous day. So perhaps it was not surprising that it was on or around March 13, 2020 when U.S. schools closed to ward off the novel coronavirus. Never before had a single calamity shuttered the doors of every school across the entire country.

Between mid-April and early August 2020, researchers conducted interviews with 120 principals in 19 states. The schools ran the gamut from the country’s urban hubs like New York City (ground zero for the original COVID-19 outbreak), Minneapolis (both before and after the death of George Floyd), Denver, and San Diego; to the vast suburban swaths of South Florida, Atlanta, Houston, and Southern California; to small towns and rural areas in including Native American reservations in Montana and North Dakota, as well as rural areas of southeastern Tennessee, and upstate New York.

SAMPLE

The full sample of principals included 120 interviews from across the nation

Twenty-two of the schools (18% of the sample) were located in four western states (CA, CO, MT, ND);

12 schools (10% of the sample) were from three central states (MN, OH, OK); 34 of the schools (28% of the sample) were from five southern states (VA, FL, GA, TN, and TX);

52 schools (43% of the sample) were from seven eastern states (CT, DE, MA, MD, NJ, NY, PA).

Interviews were organized to examine the most pressing issues faced by school leaders; including their instructional responses; challenges for students, families, and teachers; district crisis management and policy guidance; the inequities exposed by the pandemic; and strategies for self-care and attention to well-being of others.

Phase I: Critical Incidents

The 'critical incidents' during the two weeks surrounding school closure (roughly March 11 to 30). Interviews focused on the 'critical incidents' surrounding school closure; the most pressing issues leaders faced; and the extent of state and district guidance.

Phase II: The New Normal

The 'settling in' phase of how schools and districts transitioned to on-line schooling. Researchers investigated what school leaders experienced as the 'new normal' of schooling in the spring of 2020, how they organized for instruction; the experiences and challenges students, families, and teacher faced; and how leaders managed their stress and supported their own and community members' well-being and mental health.

Phase III: What's Next?

What principals were learning about what school would look like in the fall of 2020. Researchers asked leaders about what guidance they were getting about 'what's next.' Each researcher was asked to interview between five to seven principals in their context, including two elementary, two middle, and two high school principals from diverse socio-economic contexts. Researchers relied on their existing relationships with principals to identify their sample, which meant that many of the respondents had likely participated in professional development from their local colleges and universities. The established relationships between researchers and principals ideally meant that the principals would be more candid in their recounting. The interviews were largely conducted virtually via Skype or Zoom, and the audio files were transcribed. In addition to the interview, participants also completed a brief on-line survey about their personal background.

Sample

The full sample of principals included 120 interviews from across the nation. To understand the composition of the schools, we pulled demographic information from the Common Core of Data from the National Center for Education Statistics. Of these, 67 (56%) had elementary grades (preK-5), 45 (38%) had middle school grades (6-8), and 30 (25%) had high school grades. Most of the schools in the sample came from cities and suburbs. Fifty-two of the 120 schools (43%) were classified by the National Center on Education Statistics (NCES) as suburban; 47 of the schools (39%) were located in cities; 16 of the schools (13%) were rural; and 5 schools (4%) were located in towns. Schools in the sample were from all across the United States. Twenty-

PROJECT OVERVIEW

two of the schools (18% of the sample) were located in four western states (CA, CO, MT, ND); 12 schools (10% of the sample) were from three central states (MN, OH, OK); 34 of the schools (28% of the sample) were from five southern states (VA, FL, GA, TN, and TX); and the remaining 52 schools (43% of the sample) were from seven eastern states (CT, DE, MA, MD, NJ, NY, PA).

The schools had an average size of 798 students, with a standard deviation of 505. The smallest school, with only 22 students, was on an Indian reservation in North Dakota; while the largest, a Florida high school, had more than 2,500 students. The racial breakdown of students in the schools of the study was very diverse. Fifty-seven of the study schools (48%) were majority white; 23 of the schools (19%) were majority Hispanic; 19 of the schools (16%) were majority Black, and three of the study schools were predominantly American Indian. On average, schools in the sample had 52% of their students on free/reduced lunch, but the range was broad, with a standard deviation of 31%.

Of the 120 principals we interviewed, 108 (90%) completed a brief survey about their backgrounds. From the survey, we found that the sample averaged just over 8 years of experience as a principal, which ranged from 1 to 19 years. All but five of the principals had teaching experience, with an average of 8.3 years in the classroom, with a standard deviation of 4.4 years. Of those who taught, a third were general education (elementary) teachers, 19% were English Language Arts teachers, 14% were social studies teachers, 11% were mathematics teachers, and 6% were science teachers. 19 of the principals taught in another area, including physical education, special education, and Spanish. Seventy-seven (71%) were white; 20 (18%) were Black; and 7 (6%) were American Indian. Sixty percent of the sample were women.

RESEARCH TEAM

Erin Anderson, Assistant Professor
University of Denver

Bodunrin Banwo, Postdoctoral Fellow
University of Minnesota

Bradley Carpenter, Associate Professor
Baylor University

Joshua Childs, Assistant Professor
University of Texas, Austin

Chantal Francois, Assistant Professor
Towson University

Sonya Hayes, Assistant Professor
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Lea Hubbard, Professor
University of San Diego

Maya Kaul, Doctoral Student
University of Pennsylvania

Julianna Kershen
University of Oklahoma

Hollie Mackey, Associate Professor
University of North Dakota

Gopal Midha
University of Virginia

Daniel Reyes-Guerra, Associate Professor
Florida Atlantic University

Nicole Simon, University Academic Affairs Director
City University of New York

Corrie Stone-Johnson, Associate Professor
University at Buffalo

Jonathan Supovitz, Professor
University of Pennsylvania

Bryan A. VanGronigen, Assistant Professor
University of Delaware

Jennie Weiner, Associate Professor
University of Connecticut

Sheneka Williams, Professor
Michigan State University

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From April to August 2020, researchers conducted interviews with a diverse sample of 120 principals in 19 states, including elementary, middle and high school leaders from urban, suburban, and rural areas across the U.S. The interviews asked about the most pressing issues leaders faced; school and district responses; the inequities exposed by the pandemic; and strategies for care and well-being.

Click below to read more briefs from this series.

Leading in Crisis

RESEARCH BRIEF



ERIN ANDERSON
University of Denver

Sonya Hayes
University of Tennessee

Bradley Carpenter
Baylor University

ABOUT THIS STUDY

Leading in Crisis documents school and district experiences following school closures in March 2020 due to COVID-19. From April to August 2020, researchers conducted interviews with a diverse sample of 120 principals in 19 states, including elementary, middle, and high school leaders from urban, suburban, and rural areas across the U.S. The brief is about the most pressing issues school and district leaders faced during the pandemic, the inequities exposed by the pandemic, and strategies for care and well-being.

To write this brief, teams of 2-4 researchers analyzed a sub-sample of between 22-42 of the interviews identified on the team lead's letter at their convenience and recommendation.

The full study is described at the back of this brief.

Principal as Caregiver of All: Responding to Needs of Others and Self

When the school buildings closed in the spring, educators and families faced unknown challenges of supporting students remotely and continuing to provide well-being. Principals

Download

In light of stress relief center the reflections of school leaders across the nation as they attempted to navigate the overwhelming chaos of closing and reopening schools during a global pandemic. Specifically, we examined how leaders, living amidst the stressors of a global phenomenon, were able to look after their own well-being while attending to the wellbeing of their students, staff and community members.

We reviewed a representative sample of 30 interviews, which included elementary, middle, and high school principals in rural, suburban, and urban communities. Our conversations with school leaders surfaced a number of common themes. The overall motif for the brief is principal as caretaker for all. During the spring of 2020, school principals were responsible for the well-being of all stakeholders, including care of students and community

Leading in Crisis This is one of a series of briefs that focused on the critical incidents surrounding school closure and other pressing opportunities in educational leaders as they continue to grapple with the disruptions of the pandemic. The full study is described at the back of this brief.

Leading in Crisis

RESEARCH BRIEF



Chantal Francois
Tennessee University

Jennie Weiner
University of Connecticut

ABOUT THIS STUDY

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Accountability During School Closures: Moving From External to Internal

This inquiry found that the lack of external accountability pressures neither appeared to negatively impact teachers' efforts, commitment to edvisonary and rigor in their classrooms, or their responsiveness to families.


Download

In addition to suspending the COVID-19 pandemic measures and measures in recent years for equitable, standardized high-stakes testing and teacher evaluations were cancelled for the year. For some, this hiatus was a respite. Since their inception, accountability policies have been met with detractors who argue standardized tests and increased inspection of teachers' practice has done little to enhance student educational experiences and much to de-professionalize teaching and limit real learning. In contrast, supporters of external accountability measures argue they incentivize teachers to work harder, enhance their practice, and thus student learning, and make schools more responsive to families and their needs. These arguments are unlikely to abate as debates are just beginning to unfold regarding whether and how accountability measures will be utilized now and in the future as schools return to a "new normal."

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Leading in Crisis

RESEARCH BRIEF



Lea Hubbard
University of San Diego

Hollie Mackey
North Dakota State University

Jonathan A. Supovitz
University of Pennsylvania

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District Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Strong school autonomy tended to occur in districts where there were existing infrastructure and technological resources already in place.


Download

The COVID-19 pandemic represented a stress test of socio-emotional and financial resources and capacity to draw upon were better able to respond to the crisis. We continue with a discussion of district responses relative to what research on crisis management suggests, an analysis of equity issues that the district response raised, and the importance of preparation for effective crisis responses. We conclude with a set of takeaways for district leaders to consider as they reflect on their system's response and how they might adjust to respond more fruitfully to future unexpected challenges.

Leading in Crisis This is one of a series of briefs that focused on the critical incidents surrounding school closure and other pressing opportunities in educational leaders as they continue to grapple with the disruptions of the pandemic. The full study is described at the back of this brief.

Leading in Crisis

RESEARCH BRIEF



Maya Kaul
University of Pennsylvania

Bryan A. VanGronen
University of Delaware

Nicole S. Simon
City University of New York

ABOUT THIS STUDY

Leading in Crisis documents school and district experiences following school closures in March 2020 due to COVID-19. From April to August 2020, researchers conducted interviews with a diverse sample of 120 principals in 19 states, including elementary, middle, and high school leaders from urban, suburban, and rural areas across the U.S. The brief is about the most pressing issues school and district leaders faced during the pandemic, the inequities exposed by the pandemic, and strategies for care and well-being.

To write this brief, teams of 2-4 researchers analyzed a sub-sample of between 22-42 of the interviews identified on the team lead's letter at their convenience and recommendation.

The full study is described at the back of this brief.

Calm During Crisis: School Principal Approaches to Crisis Management during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Principals formulated hierarchy of needs to feel physically and psychologically safe in the classroom.

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The COVID-19 pandemic has presented an unprecedented crisis for schools around the world. Caught in the eye of this storm, school principals have been responsible for leading their schools through this crisis. This brief highlights the challenges that principals identified as most pressing in the early days of the pandemic and how they acted to respond.

The story that emerges from our data is that principals formulated their responses to the pandemic in terms of a hierarchy of needs: they understood that their students and staff had to be physically and psychologically safe before they would be successful in the classroom. Even after these basic needs were addressed, principals faced overwhelming logistical hurdles of ensuring technology access and establishing clear communication streams.

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Leading in Crisis

RESEARCH BRIEF



Bodurim O. Banwo
University of Minnesota

Erin Anderson
University of Denver

Joshua Childs
University of Texas at Austin

Corrie Stone-Johnson
University at Buffalo

ABOUT THIS STUDY

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An Examination of Challenges Educators and Families Faced in the Aftermath of COVID-19

As schools begin to feel that the "T" has been adequately addressed.

Download

As the epidemiology of COVID-19 becomes increasingly apparent, an ongoing examination of practices of schooling has begun to take place. Even as some schools across the country have reopened their doors, either physically or virtually, others are still weighing all the data and options surrounding their re-opening. Since this summer, district and school administrators have worked to design plans and implement strategies that would result in sustainable learning environments for their students and staff. Leaders have been faced with addressing equity concerns that have surfaced since the beginning of the pandemic. Students and their families, along with some of their staff, have been without adequate internet and technology options, learning materials, and access to other services that would make their remote learning environments less difficult. The rapid changes to different modes of learning have caused confusion, concern, and

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