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# How Emotional Intelligence Of Principals Affects A Campus

In the field of education, there are educators with the ability to possess knowledge of the laws and codes that are required to run a campus. However, sometimes, these principals do not lead their schools to success, regardless of the knowledge and experience they hold. With mental health and social awareness taking priority in the world, it would be advantageous to the campus, District, and community to know why principals with the same or equal leadership training experience different outcomes of school success based upon student academic achievement. Current studies and research state that campus principals who have higher levels of emotional intelligence have a more significant impact on their campus compared to their colleagues who, have been identified to have lower levels of emotional intelligence.

**Keywords:** emotional intelligence, principal leaders, campus success

## History of Emotional Intelligence

In 1990, the term “Emotional Intelligence” was used by Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer to define a type of social intelligence that also used the foresight to be aware of both one’s own feelings as well as the feelings of others. While one may have defined this as empathy, the distinction lies in using personal feelings and those of others and using them to act as a guide in decision making (Golis, 2013). Through the mid-nineties, to the present, the study of emotional intelligence has steadily increased. Some individuals have studied the effects of emotional intelligence between administrators and their staff, while others have studied the level of emotional intelligence in teachers and how students are affected. This paper will discuss the effects of emotional intelligence and the overall success of a campus.

## Purpose of Research

Students and adults alike, experience a variety of emotions daily. From one class period to the next, emotions can elevate or soar depending on an interaction with a peer or the results of an exam. At times, these feelings can be overwhelming and affect the rest of the day’s routine for an individual. Being emotionally intelligent allows individuals to manage feelings, acknowledge them and find a possible solution or alternative. In education, the relationships are the formidable bind that can make or break a student’s success. It is through the study of emotional intelligence that administrators will be able to be more purposeful servant leaders that they can become to help teachers and students succeed.

## Research Question

How does the level of emotional intelligence of a principal affect a campus?

## The Research

When “emotional intelligence” was first used as a term, by psychologists Mayer and Salovey, it was to indicate the ability of an individual to acknowledge one’s own feelings, while considering

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the feelings of others and using those emotions as a tool for forming a plan or deciding. This ability to acknowledge multiple feelings has played a role in the workforce and in the arena of education. “Individuals (from interns to managers) with higher EI are better equipped to work cohesively within teams, deal with change more effectively, and manage stress – thus enabling them to more efficiently pursue objectives” (Houston, 2019). In the arena of education, there are hundreds of goals and objectives that need to be achieved. It is the desire of the principal that the personal goals of students and teachers will align with the goals, mission, and vision of the campus. At any level of education, whether it be elementary, middle, or high school, in the 180 days or 75,600 minutes of the school year, each student and staff member can experience up to “27 distinct categories of emotions” (Lee, 2017). Recent studies in research are showing that there is a correlation between emotion and success, which correlates to the classroom.

Principals, in the past, were often known to take on disciplinary issues that arose on a campus. If a student or child was “sent to the Principal’s office” he or she was in trouble for doing something bad. Today, principals juggle many more expectations. Principals must know data, how to manage finances, while managing people. The role of emotional intelligence is large and is being recognized as an important skill, necessary to build trust and report with students and staff, which is necessary to build a positive campus culture and climate that is nurturing to the students and staff.

From a curricula perspective, there are two different paths an administrator can take to help achieve success at his or her campus. Teachers can embed specific emotional intelligence lesson plans within the instructional day. By providing skills such as mindfulness, assertiveness, and reflection, students will be better prepared to work thru difficult social and emotional situations that occupy their thoughts rather than focusing on education. Effective implementation of emotional intelligence curricula in the classroom then allows for stronger classroom management and collaborative classroom settings between peers and the students and teacher.

In the late 1960s, Walter Mischel, a professor and psychologist at Stanford University conducted an experiment on delayed gratification in children that became known as the Stanford Marshmallow Experiment (Editorial Team, 2019). Ten years after the study, Mischel followed up with the study of the then four-year old children he offered a marshmallow to. If these children could delay the immediate gratification to eat the marshmallow for fifteen minutes, they would receive a second marshmallow. Mischel, was able to correlate that the four-year old children who could delay their gratification, “went on to receive significantly higher SAT scores” and “developed better social cognitive and emotional coping skills” (Editorial Team, 2019). Mischel, completed his study when the then four-year olds had reached their 40’s and 50’s. He found that these same children, who delayed the marshmallow gratification so many years ago, had been successful in education, managed stress better and had a greater sense of self-worth (Editorial Team, 2019).

While the Stanford Marshmallow Experiment wasn’t designed to identify emotional intelligence or its significance, it is an experiment that supports the belief in knowing one’s emotions and how to support or change the negative or impulsive emotion to a more positive or thought-out behavior. The ability to manage self-control will be reflected in the classroom, helping to provide a controlled environment that is focused on classroom instruction.

While teachers can embed emotional intelligence curricula into the classroom, it is ultimately the

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role of the administrator to provide emotional stability for the campus. By providing a high level of emotional intelligence, a principal will be able to maintain trust, develop and maintain positive relationships, and create a safe environment and positive academic culture focused on academics. "A recent study found that school leaders who reported greater levels of emotional exhaustion were more likely to experience a range of negative emotions, such as anxiety or anger, and were less likely to experience various positive emotions, such as hope or joy" (Brackett, Floman & Bradley, 2018). This negative impact is felt on the individual principal and is passed on to the staff and students. Teachers and students alike will model the behavior that they see and experience. "...self-awareness and self-management skills have become the pillars of pedagogy and school culture" (Patti, Holzer, Stern, Floman, & Brackett, 2018). Leaders are then able to model their own emotional intelligence skills. Through staff, student, and teacher feedback, leaders can adjust their own emotional intelligence and leadership style, while making positive influence. In school communities or campuses where a principal is determined to focus on his or her emotional intelligence, educators and students alike are able to be proactive with their emotions, which can prevent extreme situations that can become worse or blown out of proportion. Schools are able to work through issues and resolve differences and challenges as opposed to ignoring problematic situations.

When a principal is emotionally intelligent self-aware, he or she can create individual and personal self-awareness for him or herself as well as creating a successful school. With demands of 40 comparison schools, campus distinctions, STAAR/EOC results, National Merit Scholar recognition, administrators must find any way to help support students and find any means to help students be successful. Through effective emotional leaders, teachers are able to better express and manage classroom frustrations; and possibly being able to redirect those frustrations and finding a positive alternative. These positive changes are reflected in the classroom; so rather than focusing on a social event or emotional situation, students can redirect the focus to academics, which will lead to a positive outcome for the campus, teacher, and most importantly, the student.

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