



Breakthrough Principals: A Step-by-Step Guide to Building Stronger Schools

By Jean Desravines, Jaime Aquino, Benjamin Fenton

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Bridge the achievement gap with proven strategies for student success

Breakthrough Principals debunks the myth of the 'superhero' principal by detailing the common actions and practices of leaders at our nation's fastest-gaining public schools. Based on the authors' Transformational Leadership Framework, which they developed through in-depth study of more than 100 high-gaining, high-poverty schools, the book distills findings into a practical, action-focused plan for diagnosing school needs and implementing structures, systems and practices that accelerate student achievement.

Brought to life by case studies of principals who have led dramatic gains in student achievement, the book is a how-to guide for increasing the quality of teaching and learning; improving school culture; attracting and supporting high-performing teachers; and involving parents and community to help students achieve. You'll learn how breakthrough principals make the school's mission a real part of both strategy and practice, and set up sustainable systems that support consistent, ongoing improvement. High-impact practices are organized into five broad categories: learning and teaching, school-wide culture, aligned staff, operations and systems, and personal leadership.

The primary job of school leadership is to help students succeed. It begins with first recognizing and prioritizing areas of need, then finding and implementing the most effective solutions. Whether you work in a turn around environment, or want to make a good school better, this book will give you a set of concrete practices—illustrated through examples of real principals in real schools—that have been proven to work.

- Discover the primary drivers of student achievement
- Work toward the school's vision in staffing, operations, and systems
- Set the tone for all relationships and practices with good leadership

Closing the achievement gap is a major goal of educational leadership, and principals are forever searching for viable methods that help them better serve their students. *Breakthrough Principals* unveils the details behind the success

stories from across the nation to provide a roadmap to transformative gains.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

THE PROVEN FRAMEWORK THAT CAN TRANSFORM YOUR SCHOOL

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Brought to life by real-world stories of principals who have led transformative gains in student achievement, the book is a how-to guide for increasing the quality of teaching and learning; improving culture; attracting and supporting high-performing teachers; and involving parents and community effectively. *Breakthrough Principals* unveils the details behind the success stories from across the nation, providing a roadmap to dramatic school improvement.

"As CEO of Chicago Public Schools and U.S. Secretary of Education, I have seen firsthand the life-changing impact that highly skilled principals have on school and student success. In *Breakthrough Principals*, New Leaders distills what it has learned from 15 years of training, supporting, and studying such exemplary school leaders into a step-by-step guide that can help every principal—particularly those leading schools most in need of improvement—achieve similarly transformative results."

—**Arne Duncan**, U.S. Secretary of Education, 2009–2015

"*Breakthrough Principals* details the essential role school leaders play in ensuring that exceptional teaching and learning occurs in every classroom. The book shows how exemplary principals build powerful cultures, develop robust leadership teams and teacher leaders, and provide effective professional learning, thereby creating schools where both teachers and students excel."

—**Irvin Scott**, Deputy Director of Effective Teaching, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

About the Author

JEAN DESRAVINES serves as chief executive officer of New Leaders, an innovative school reform organization that develops and supports highly effective leaders to turn around the nation's high-need public schools. **JAIME AQUINO** is chief program officer at New Leaders. **BENJAMIN FENTON** is cofounder and chief strategy officer at New Leaders.

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