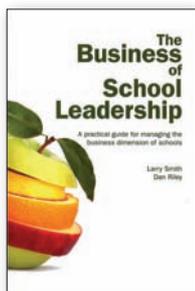


**The Business of School Leadership**  
– A practical guide for managing the business dimension of schools

Larry Smith and Dan Riley  
ACER Press  
ISBN 9780864319654  
RR \$34.95



Over the course of 2007–08, authors Larry Smith and Dan Riley conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with a sample of 39 school principals across Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. Their objective was to establish how well school principals felt that they were coping with the myriad non-educational management tasks they are expected to perform.

The short answer was – not very well. Without exception, the principals interviewed stated that the business dimensions of school leadership was occupying a significant and ever increasing proportion of their professional lives, even though they considered their primary role to be leadership of teaching and learning.

While educational matters were seen as extremely important, they were not seen as urgent and, as one principal said: “could be put on the back burner.” On the other hand, business agendas needed to be addressed urgently lest they cause major problems for the school.

Generally, the interviewees said that they were far from confident in dealing with business management matters, adding that they felt they had received inadequate preparation for the business component of their role prior to their appointment.

In response to these findings, the authors have written a handy 132-page ‘how to’ that principals can turn to when confronted with the types of issues that a manager in commerce or industry would expect to deal with day by day.

In nine chapters, the authors cover strategy, finances, decision-making, time management, crisis management, marketing, staff, risk management and reviewing business performance. Each chapter starts with a boxed scenario that sets the scene for the discussion and advice that follows.

Chapter 2, for example, describes Jayne, excited to be taking up her first principal’s role after 20 years. Over 12 pages, the chapter steps her through defining what a budget actually is; how to develop a budget; allocating departmental funds; monitoring the budget etc. The chapter concludes with a list of key points that need to be addressed during the budget planning process and throughout the course of the budget period. The other chapters follow the same format

If this sounds a bit like ‘School Management for Dummies’, it is. But there’s nothing wrong

with this approach. It recognises that anyone confronted with a task that they have not been trained to do needs simple, easy to follow, step by step guidance.

At \$34.95, *The Business of School Leadership* will be money well spent by a new school principal. More experienced school heads will also benefit from having it on hand.

**A Collective ACT**  
– Leading a small school

Michelle Anderson, Michelle Davis, Peter Douglas, David Lloyd, Barrey Niven, Hilary Thiele  
Acer Press  
ISBN 9780864318626  
RR \$34.95



School leadership matters. We have known this for a long time. The Principal is the role model. The one who sets the tone of the school. The duty of the principal is to provide the teachers with the tools they need to carry out their work efficiently. There are now an abundance of reports that inform us that teacher quality is the single most important school level determinant of school performance.

The research cases in this book create a bridge between educational research and practice and provide resources that support educational leadership. All we need to do is look at the current government *My School* website to gauge the effectiveness of the teaching staff and what they are able to do to elicit best performance of their students.

It matters not whether the small school has 60 or 200 students, effective teaching practice and management will yield the best results. The school whatever the size is accountable to all those concerned for the success rate of the students involved.

Ultimately the principal takes the rap if a school appears to be underachieving and does not meet the benchmarks as set by the National Curriculum Standards.

Most countries view professional learning as a key lever for leadership development and improvement. The fact is that principals spend a great deal of their time at Zone Principals meetings each month to keep themselves informed of the latest trends in teaching. Principals are funded or partially funded to travel overseas to view teaching practice and school management which enables them to compare their own management style with what is occurring in ‘like’ schools in other countries.

*A Collective Act* not only tabulates evidence of the positive aspects of leadership, it also deals with the weaknesses in the traditional in-service system now referred to as ‘Personal Development’ of which both principals and teachers must attend as a part

of the government’s wage agreements. One in particular cites “leaders’ low levels of ownership for the in-service education system.”

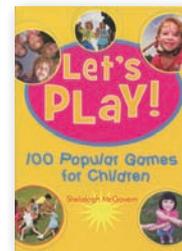
The book states “effective leadership will not emerge from teaching alone or from a qualification but from an increased attention to what leaders need to learn to increase the explicit links between knowing and doing.”

*A Collective Act – Leading a small school* explores the characteristics of, the context for and the challenges to successful leadership. The research and the cases present a strong argument for better understanding this distinct context of leadership.

**Barb Ady**

**Let’s Play! 100 popular games for children**

Shelagh McGovern  
Rockpool Publishing  
ISBN 978921295348  
RR \$19.99



Author Shelagh McGovern is both a mother and an aerial and physical theatre performer. She takes a systematic approach to organising structured play in *Let’s Play! 100 games for children*.

The games are grouped by age (5–6, 7–9 and 10–12 years) and by the level of physical activity involved – from quiet indoor to outdoor chasing.

Though the publisher’s blurb describes it as “a fun book for parents” teachers will find old favourites and many new games to engage their classes.

The description for each game include: age ranges; number of players; set-up time; formation; space; equipment; directions; variations of the game to suit teachers, children, and the available space.

There are 250 colour photographs of children playing the games, and an excellent table of contents to make choosing a game to play quick and easy. *Let’s Play! 100 games for children* is a valuable resource for teachers of children from five to 12 years.

**Barb Ady**

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