

The Superintendent as Instructional Leader: Living This Role in Daily Interactions with Your Board of Education

Dr. Barbara Sargent

besargent@pthsd.net

Superintendent of Schools

Parsippany-Troy Hills Township School District



- ❑ Women make up **76% of teachers and 54% of public school principals**.
- ❑ Compare that to **23% of public school superintendents** who were female during the same year.
- ❑ New Jersey's numbers are slightly higher, with nearly **30% of public school superintendents** identified as female (NJ School Directory 2016).

Where are the women?

Source: U.S. Department of Education Schools and Staff Survey Report (2012)
NJ School Directory 2016
AFL-CIO's Department for Professional Employees (2019)

Traditional Career Paths

MEN

Between 3-5 years of classroom experience

Often serve in a coaching capacity

Move into a vice-principal position quickly
– and then into the principal's office

Typically, men proceed to a principal's
position within 7 years

WOMEN

Between 10-15 years of classroom
experience

Transition into a variety of positions,
including counselor, reading specialist,
curriculum coordinator

Many women never leave these positions

Female principals average 12-15 years of
classroom teaching experience

Source: Differences in Leadership Behavior of Female Public School Principals in New Jersey, 1997, Seton Hall University, Doctoral Thesis - Sargent

Qualities of an Instructional Leader

Cares about students and their development/progress

Interested in professional development for teachers

Takes great care in hiring new staff and new administrators

Keeps teachers and principals focused on instruction and students

Is informed about new programs and strategies

Knows what good instruction looks like

Frames decisions around best practice instruction and consistency of instruction

Specific Strategies

- ❑ School Walkthroughs
- ❑ Board of Education Confidential Newsletters
- ❑ Signature Line
- ❑ Interview Committee involvement
- ❑ Articles for local newspaper
- ❑ Student Achievement presentations
- ❑ Book Study groups
- ❑ Where do you spend your time?

School Walkthroughs

- Once or twice a year, schedule tours for Board of Education members in your schools.
- Pre-plan with school principals to highlight new programs, new curricula, or special events.
- Great way for board members to see district goals in action.
- Excellent opportunity for board members to engage with principals and teachers.
- Positive relationship-building practice for Superintendents.

We're Walking...



Central Middle School, Principal Mark Gray

8:30-9:00 a.m.

SAMPLE ITINERARY

- Please arrive to the middle school Main Office by 8:30
- **Literacy Coaches** at work with middle school content area teachers
- Robotics class
- World Language classes

Knollwood School, Principal Merisa Rosa

9:10-9:40 a.m.

- **Physical Education**
Grade 5 students will be working to connect mind and body through activities embedded within physical education class.
- **Primary Literacy infused with ESL instruction**
Teachers will be working together to embed English vocabulary and skills within this primary literacy instruction lesson.
- **Infusion of Technology in Grade 4 Math**
Students will be working with Chromebooks during this math lesson.

Rockaway Meadow School, Principal Keith Cortright

9:45-10:15 a.m.

- **Physical Education**
Students in the Intermediate Autistic Class will participate in special adapted exercises.
- **Two of the Primary Autistic Classrooms**
Students will be working on activities connected to their IEP Goals and Objectives. Teachers are using iPads to track student performance with *Lift Ed* software. The behaviorist can also answer questions about the Autistic classes.
- **Primary Literacy Instruction (Guided Reading)**
The Sensory Room is a work in progress and allows us to address our students' unique needs. Our School Psychologist developed a grant proposal to help support/enhance this room.
- **Upper Grade Literacy Instruction**
Fifth grade Reader's Workshop / Guided Reading lessons

BOE Confidential Newsletters

- Offer background on agenda items.
- Share positive news about faculty and students.
- Mini-reports on items related to district goals/initiatives.
- Explanations for such practices as Principal Evaluation components, Running Records, Reading Level benchmarks, PSAT for sophomore students, etc.

Signature Line

Dr. Barbara Sargent, Superintendent of Schools

Currently reading Student Voice: The Instrument of Change by Russell Quaglia/Michael Corso

Parsippany-Troy Hills School District

292 Parsippany Road

Parsippany, NJ 07054

973/263-7200 x7250

Interview Committee Involvement

[The Superintendent's Role in Hiring School Principals](#)



Articles for local newspapers



Student Achievement Presentations

Unless you have educators on your Board of Education, they will not be well-versed in *Start Strong*, NJSLA, NWEA, DLM, Running Records, etc. This is your chance to demonstrate your knowledge and educate your Board.

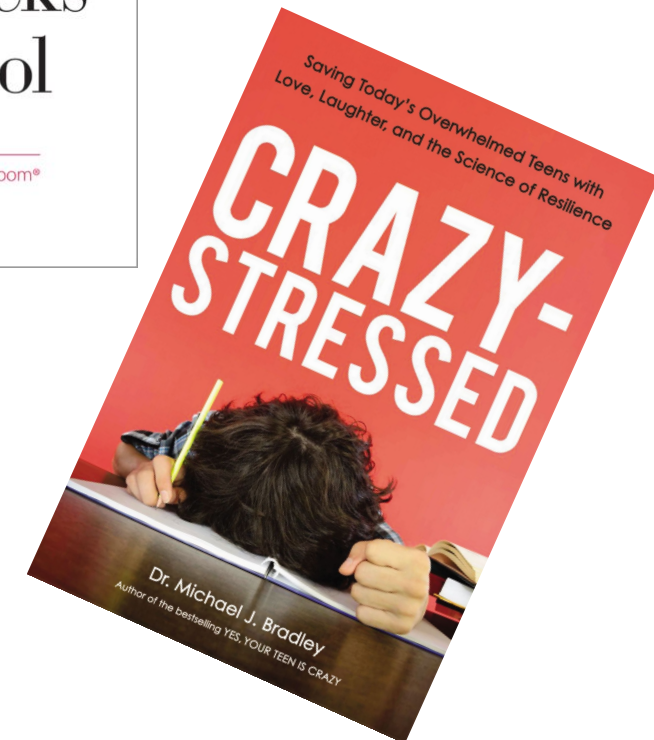
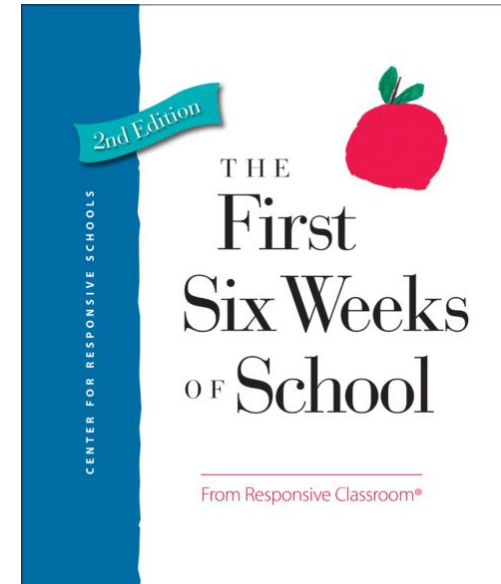
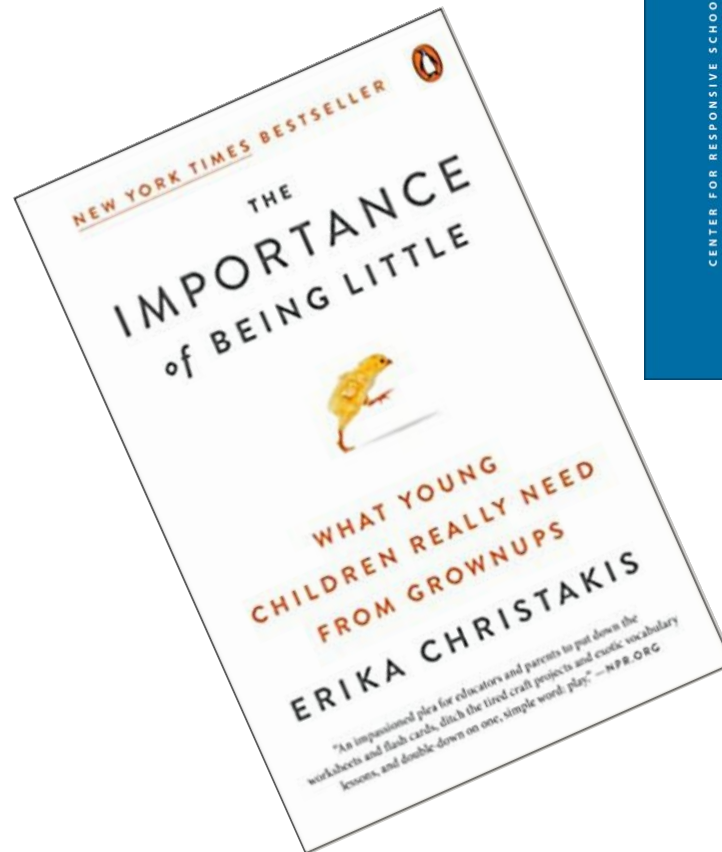
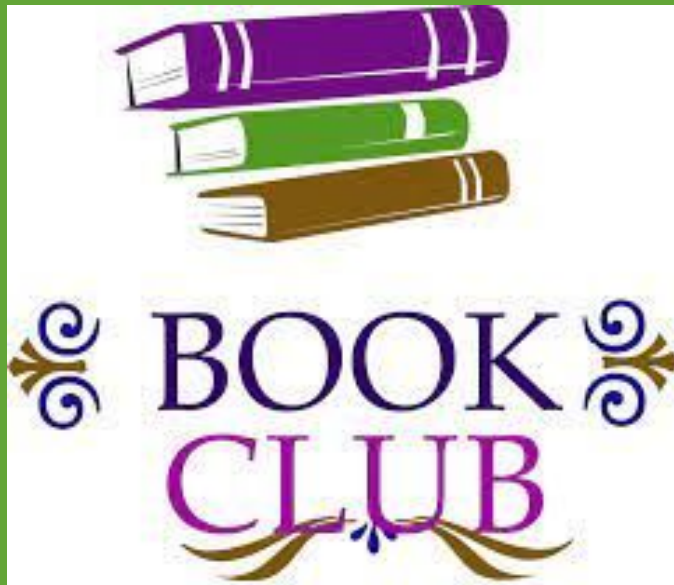
Why do AP courses matter?

Research shows that - - -

- Once in college, AP students outperform their non-AP peers.
- AP students perform better in the first year of college.
- Students who perform well in AP are more likely to return for their second year of college, even after controlling for prior academic performance.
- Students who took an AP Exam were likely to complete their college degree in the same area as the exam or a closely related discipline.
- The best predictor of bachelor's degree attainment was the rigor of the courses a student completed in high school.

Book Study Groups

- ❑ Novels being recommended for Board approval.
- ❑ Parent Book Clubs
- ❑ Professional Development texts



Definition of visibility - Merriam-Webster

[https://www.merriam-webster.com > dictionary > visibil...](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/visibility)

: the ability to see or be seen The bad weather caused poor **visibility** on the roads. Bright clothing increased the hunter's **visibility**.

visibility. noun.

Where (and how) do you spend your time?

What will you see?

Visiting schools to see instruction, articulate with principals, and speak with teachers, students, paraprofessionals, custodians.



Curriculum at work, use of technology, state of facilities, instructional practices being employed, co-teaching and differentiated instruction, building relationships with the people in your school community, and more!

Watch athletic practices/games, see Marching Band rehearsals, Trunk or Treat, enjoy school play rehearsals.



See professional staff in coaching mode, understand the 'back end' of final productions, chat with parents and students.

Attend off-site events: Eagle Scout Courts of Honor, Regional Choir Concerts, Cheer Competitions.



Speak with parents and students, showcase your interest in extra-curricular activities, cheer kids on.



And, they get to see you!



We do not have to become heroes overnight.
Just a step at a time,
meeting each thing that comes up,
seeing it is not as dreadful as it appeared,
discovering we have the strength to stare it down.

– Eleanor Roosevelt

Great Leaders Series

LEADERSHIP**NOW**