

# Preface

## TODAY'S SUPERVISOR

Like most new building-level supervisors, you have probably received little training for the job you are now asked to perform. Despite the graduate courses in supervision, administration, and curriculum development you may have taken, no one has really prepared you for the day-to-day responsibilities and realities of this job. You ask yourself: How do I deal responsibly and efficiently with the day-to-day business of supervising teachers? How do I structure my day and find the time to attend to the myriad administrative, curricular, and supervisory tasks before me? Support from colleagues in similar positions is warm and encouraging but fleeting, and although you would welcome a mentoring program, none exists at your school. You are mostly left to your own devices, learning what to do and how to do it on the job, doing the best you can as you go along. Like thousands of other men and women in building-level supervisory positions in schools all across America, you have been given a new job with few of the necessary support and training opportunities you will need to be successful. *The sad irony is that while your own training needs are overlooked, you are expected to provide ongoing professional training for your staff.*

This book is designed to give you the professional help and training you need. However, we did not write this book with only beginning administrators in mind; veteran supervisors will also find it a valuable resource. Whatever your level of experience, Supportive Supervision is a method, a process, and a guide that will help you do your job. Not only will our program help you perform your job well, it will provide you with a clear direction and focus as you develop and enhance the personal qualities and skills you will need as a building-level supervisor. Supportive Supervision takes a step-by-step process approach to all facets of instructional leadership. In this book you will find individual chapters on goal setting, instructional planning, observation, staff development, extensive professional commitment, and evaluation. By using many examples, practical illustrations, realistic situations, sample documents, and useful forms,

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Supportive Supervision offers a clear, fully developed, and focused plan to follow as you supervise your teachers. In this book practitioners will find a very useful, very readable, and hands-on guidebook that will help fill the gap created by schools and districts unable to allocate sufficient resources to the staff development and training of its supervisors.

The Supportive Supervision program will do more than just fill this training gap. It will help you as a new or experienced supervisor become an outstanding leader. It is our firm belief that despite the many different and contradictory roles you are often called upon to play, that to become a truly outstanding leader, you must recognize that your first priority is to become an *instructional* leader. Now more than ever, with the passage of the No Child Left Behind legislation, we are accountable for providing quality instruction so that all children reach proficiency levels. In order to create an outstanding and creative teaching staff, in order to create a school that provides an appropriate and challenging education for all its students, it is more important than ever that we develop the personal qualities and the supervisory skills and behaviors to become true instructional leaders in a student-centered environment. As the problems associated with a growing teacher shortage become more severe—lateral entry teachers, underprepared teachers, teachers teaching out of field—the need for better instructional leadership and better supervision grows stronger. Above all else, we must all become what our educational systems need most. As supervisors, each of us must strive to become what we like to call a *teacher of teachers*.

### **SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISION WORKS**

The Supportive Supervision program is a proven methodology that has demonstrated results in improved instruction and academic performance. The program was evolved over time by practicing administrators in the nationally recognized district of excellence, the Sewanhaka Central High School District in New York. A recipient of numerous awards, including the prestigious New York State Excelsior Award for academic achievement, the Sewanhaka district is made up of five large, comprehensive Grade 7 to 12 schools offering a wide variety of academic, technical, and vocational programs. The Supportive Supervision program gained its clearest expression in the two most successful schools in the district, New Hyde Park Memorial High School and Elmont Memorial High School. Both schools have been nationally recognized as Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence, and *Redbook* magazine awarded each school its highest recognition for overall excellence.

Although research shows only an indirect link between leadership behaviors and student achievement,<sup>1</sup> creating a supportive culture of instructional leadership in the school can and does lead to academic improvement. With the Supportive Supervision program in place for the past 14 years, both Elmont and New Hyde Park have seen increased time on task, improved instructional delivery, and dramatic rises in their students' academic achievement. With a 95% minority enrollment, Elmont has maintained a 99% graduation rate for the past seven years, and an impressive 95% of its graduates go on to attend college. Over the course of the past ten years, the number of students receiving Regents diplomas (the most rigorous academic program) more than doubled, the number of AP scholars jumped tenfold, and the number of students who had multiple failures was halved. Similar to Elmont, New Hyde Park also boasts a 99% graduation rate with 96% going on to college. An impressive three quarters of its graduating class earn Regents diplomas, and results on state tests earned New Hyde Park distinction for having exceeded all five state performance standards for language arts and mathematics at both the middle and secondary levels. Finally, for the past several years both Elmont and New Hyde Park have achieved high school dropout rates well below 1%. The state performance standard is 5%.<sup>2</sup> Both schools are well positioned to meet and exceed the new mandates of the No Child Left Behind legislation.

## **BECOMING A TEACHER OF TEACHERS**

In this book you will discover a program that works. Drawing upon our many years of experience in education as district and building-level supervisors, we will show you how to create a clearly focused, fully integrated, and dynamic supervisory program targeting the professional development and instructional improvement of all staff members and the increased academic performance of all students. Whether you are an experienced administrator or new administrator, our book will show you how to develop trust and form collaborative relationships with your staff, and how to improve your own leadership skills and supervisory style. Using a step-by-step approach and numerous practical examples, chapters will show you how to collaborate with staff on establishing a schoolwide goal-setting process focused on academic improvement, how to implement effective lesson planning, and how to conduct supportive and meaningful classroom observations. Other chapters will explain how to recruit and hire the right teachers, how to fashion professional development opportunities to meet the instructional needs of the staff, and how to instill a culture of extensive professional commitment. Using

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sample reports, the final chapter will present a three-part process and writing mode for the annual teacher evaluation. Within each chapter we also weave discussion on how the Supportive Supervision program can be applied to three categories of teachers: the beginning teacher, the experienced teacher, and the marginal teacher.

Our hope is that as you employ the principles of instructional leadership with the Supportive Supervision model we provide, you will embrace the challenges of the future, successfully meet the needs of staff and students, and become an outstanding supervisor, a true *teacher of teachers*.