

and investment. He knows that human beings crave connection and deep bonds with other human beings. And he knows how to create these connections and bonds.

You'll know if you're entering a healthy community by the way you are greeted as you arrive on campus -- by security guards, office staff, children and parents. Just register how many smiling faces you see. That'll give you a big insight into the health of communities at the school. Ask teachers and administrators: How is community intentionally built here? What happens when relationships break down? How well (personally and professionally) does the staff know each other? Are there cliques of teachers here? How are relationships across differences (race, age, background, etc.) built? And ask the school leader: What is your vision for community at this site?

Find yourself a healthy community and you'll see your happiness increase, your health improve, and your professional practice reach new levels of excellence.

### Emotional Intelligence

The third quality of a great leader is one who is emotionally intelligent. Emotional intelligence (EQ) is the ability to understand

and manage your own emotions and recognize, understand and manage the emotions of others. An emotionally intelligent leader is usually calm and grounded, empathetic, and is able to deal with conflict between people. Another important quality of an emotionally intelligent leader is the ability to take care of herself -- to manage her stress, health, relationships, and so on.

You'll recognize an emotionally intelligent leader if you feel listened to and understood. He won't be distracted, seemingly impatient, or offering what might feel like rote responses to your questions. You can also ask a leader questions such as: How do you care for yourself? How do you manage stress? How do you respond to your staff's stress? And you can ask staff about their leader: How does the principal show his frustration or anger? Do you feel that your principal listens well and cares about you? How does your principal deal with conflict amongst staff? How does your principal demonstrate appreciation for you?

Emotional intelligence in a leader has been found to be the number one predictor of an organization's ability to be successful. Although leaders with high EQ are less common, they are out there.

# What Makes a Great School Leader?

*Elena Aguilar*

This is the time of year when, for many different reasons, some teachers consider taking positions at other schools. I've received a number of calls from friends and colleagues this spring asking for my advice on this difficult decision. Here's what I always say: It's all about the principal or head of school. Find a site with a great leader and while your struggles might not be over, they'll be significantly reduced. The three qualities I find most indicative of a great school leader are visionary leadership, community builder, and emotional intelligence.

## Visionary Leadership

You've probably heard a term like "visionary leadership" used in reference to a site leader. But what does that mean? How do you know if a leader is a visionary? A visionary leader is clear about what he or she believes and knows is best for children -- for their academic, social, and emotional learning. The leader's individual beliefs have developed in collaboration with other stakeholders and articulated into some kind of vision or mission statement. You might ask the site leader as well as staff, students,

and parents, "What's really important at this school?" Or "What are you striving to create here?" That's where you'll hear elements of a vision. Also important element is that the experiences of students and outcomes are at the center of this vision. You'll know if you hear a vision if it makes you feel something good: inspired, motivated, excited, and so on.

A visionary leader talks and walks the school's vision. Her actions consistently align with it. Furthermore, she has a plan for how to implement this vision and every day takes actions towards leading all stakeholders towards this vision. The vision is consistently acted up, all initiatives align to it, and the principal is its primary champion.

## Community Builder

A head of school who is a community builder knows that he cannot implement the school's vision alone. He knows that high-functioning teams are essential; he knows that a healthy community (for children and staff) will contribute to stability, retention,