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## **Monthly Themes for District and School Leaders: 2017-2018**

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Following are the themes that will be addressed in *NorthStar for Principals* and *Galileo for Superintendents and District Level Administrators* throughout the 2017-18 school year:

### **What Increasing Achievement Really Means (August 2017)**

With spring test results in hand, schools and districts are outlining plans to increase achievement. Yet, achievement may not look the same for every learner. With no universal criteria to establish the exact growth a student should make from year to year, we must look beyond standardized assessments for the answer. This issue provides a longer term view of achievement and how to increase it.

### **Leading with Moral Courage (September 2017)**

Our society honors and even reveres physical courage. Taking physical risk, persevering with pain, and competing despite long odds are at the heart of our fascination with extreme sports and reality shows. However, moral courage, standing up against injustice, speaking truth to power, defending the defenseless, and asking difficult—but important—questions can be equally daunting. These are important elements of courage for leaders, but they may not be as revered or even accepted. This issue will examine the nature of moral courage and its role in purpose-driven leadership.

### **Educating Students for the World of Work (October 2017)**

Ask the business community what they're looking for in prospective employees and SAT scores are rarely mentioned. Instead, a two billion-dollar "people analytics" industry has emerged to help companies drill into the mindset of prospective employees. This issue adopts a K-12 lens to educating students for the world of work.

### **Where Good Ideas Come From (November 2017)**

We all know a good idea when we see one—the color TV, Post-It Notes, Bluetooth, and YouTube to name a few. But how do organizations like Google, Netflix, and Airbnb do in a few years what other enterprises take a lifetime to accomplish? This issue explores how "institutionalized" environments like schools connect ideas rather than reject them. Readers are exposed to the fluid networks that push people outside their comfort zone to generate breakthrough discoveries.

### **Communication 3.0 (December 2017)**

When the Internet appeared in the '90s, it forever changed the face of communication. Email keeps people chained to their office. Facebook is not face-to-face. Texts allow for fewer words, yet can portray us in ways we don't want to be portrayed. This issue focuses on keeping the art of communication from becoming a lost art. Articles cover multiple entry points from messages, including speaking directly to individuals; finding the right tone, style, and expression; matching interactions with our audience; and balancing digital tools with human emotions.

### **Ed Tech: What's Hot and What's Not in the Year Ahead (January 2018)**

Just because technology is available, that doesn't mean we have to acquire it. Writers weigh in on which technology is likely to accelerate teaching and learning and which may be on its way out. Updates are provided on the popularity of 1:1 devices, learning apps, open source content, flipped classrooms, data dashboards, and other recent trends. Readers also learn how districts are dealing with one of the greatest concerns of the tech era: data privacy protections.

### **Dealing with Difficult People (February 2018)**

Each of us has people with whom we have difficulty working, communicating, and serving. They may be demanding, cynical, impossible to please, or perhaps just think differently than we do. Regardless, there's little chance that we will be able to change them. To that end, this issue will provide thinking frames and insights leaders can use to find more success with those who challenge our patience and interpersonal know-how.

### **Celebrating and Learning from Mistakes (March 2018)**

Mistakes can be embarrassing. They can also reveal areas in need of skill-building. Most of us would prefer to avoid mistakes whenever possible. Yet, mistakes are at the core of adult as well as student learning. Real progress almost always includes mistakes along the way. Albert Einstein is quoted as saying, "A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new." This issue will explore the importance and utility of the right kind of mistakes; those we should embrace rather avoid.

### **Spend What You Need, Need What You Spend (April 2018)**

By April, most schools and districts have started to finalize their budgets for next year. As such, we often see a surge in spending due to "use it or lose it" policies. Since low-value spending is habit-forming, this issue lays out ways to match actual needs with available dollars. Articles cover spending patterns, economies of scale, challenging sacred cows, and avoiding end-of-the-year spending sprees.

### **Lead Out, Lift Up (May 2018)**

Leadership is an outward function. Yet, lifting people up as we try to hold down the fort can create a heavy burden—especially during the final stretch of the year. This issue hones in on formal and informal structures that nudge people past fatigue, vulnerability, and indifference. Articles reveal what it means to be an uplifting leader.

### **Aim High but Aim Right (June 2018)**

As we lay out priorities for the upcoming year, the danger isn't that we aim too high and fall short; the danger is that we aim too low and hit our mark. How do we balance competing priorities to achieve a future that exceeds current reality? How can the "worthiness" of our priorities be evaluated? What plans will allow us to measure progress in a feasible, effective way?

### **Changing the Way We Work (July 2018)**

For each of us who sought a leadership position because we wanted to, there may be an equal number of us doing it because we were asked to. Perhaps we were swept up by the momentum of an exciting opportunity. Or someone tapped us on the shoulder and said, "You can do this job." No matter how we came to be where we are, school leadership is a daunting task. This issue examines the thinking, language, commitments, and authenticity that underscore how we work. Conscious change strategies guide readers in moving themselves and their organization forward.