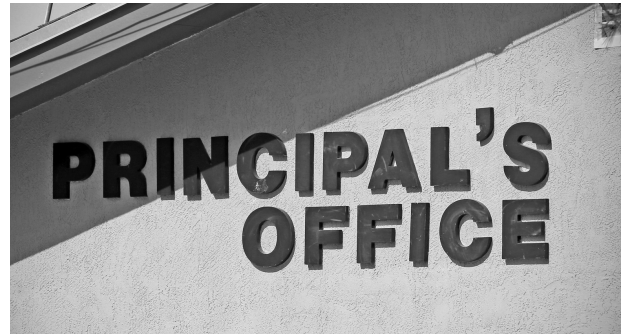


First Steps

- Learn about your local schools. Study the school report cards on the district website to learn more about demographics and needs. Consider where you have teachers, staff, or students already engaged in a school.
- Pray and seek God's guidance in choosing a school. Ask for wisdom, discernment and favor as you move forward.
- Focus on one school and its specific needs.
- Pray about your initial conversation with the school principal. Ask God to open the door for a meeting and to guide the conversation.
- Call to make an appointment with the school principal and let him/her know why you want to meet. Cold calls and emails are not the best way to make a connection.



- Understand that it takes time to build trust with a school administration. Initially, you may be asked to help with the grounds or building. This might involve landscaping the campus, painting of rooms, or furnishing a teacher lounge. There may be a need for a space to hold an event. These are beginning steps to building relationships and letting them know you care about their needs.
- As principals share their needs, listen carefully. Do not promise more than you can handle. Always UNDER promise and OVER deliver.
- If a principal does not express a need, ask more specifically if there is something you can do to support and encourage their teachers or if they would be interested in Reading Buddies or mentors for struggling students.

Principal Meeting

- Go to the meeting with “open hands” and no agenda. Let the principal know you are there to serve in any way you are needed.
- Let them hear your appreciation of the investment they and their staff make every day to educate and shape the lives of the young people in your community. Acknowledge that you recognize the pandemic has made their work more difficult.
- Express your desire to “walk beside” them and provide support, resources and encouragement for students and teachers.
- Ask, “How can we help?” Other helpful questions are, “What is your greatest need? Or What keeps you up at night?”

Next Steps

- Determine the school’s volunteer guidelines and security protocols regarding child safety. At the least, volunteers will be asked to have a background check.
- Some schools provide volunteer training. If they do not, Heart4Schools will be happy to provide Reading Buddy or mentor training.
- Continue to reach out to the principal, at least once a month, to ask how you can help.
- Build relationships with administrators and staff.

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