

Section 1

Organizing Administrative Systems Packing for the Trip

- 1:1** Organizing Staff Communication
- 1:2** Organizing for Family Involvement
- 1:3** Taking Charge of Your School's Budget
- 1:4** Organizing for State Assessment
- 1:5** Organizing the School Year: A Monthly Principal Checklist
- 1:6** Identification, Planning, and Compliance for English Language Learners
- 1:7** Coordinating Support Services for English Language Learners with Special Needs
- 1:8** Board Training: The Quality Governance Model
- 1:9** Developing a Strict Discipline Academy

We subtitled this section “Packing for the Trip” because it’s about getting everything ready for your school improvement journey—things probably best undertaken in those August days before you launch yourselves toward another year. But we could as well have called it “Highway Construction” or “Building Dams and Dredging Waterways” because it’s also about setting up the infrastructure within which all the system’s participants will operate as they work on all the other processes. If these systems are working well, they’re almost invisible. Water just flows downhill, and we never know the Army Corps of Engineers has graded the slope. Or “express traffic” just peels off into a center lane, and we hardly notice why lane space opened up around us. But talk to anyone who has worked where administrative systems aren’t smoothly established, and you’ll hear how any piece of work quadruples when you’re not sure of the infrastructure beneath it.

Getting organized—having agreed-upon habits of communication and planning—is largely a leadership responsibility. But smart leaders don’t hole up and design these systems alone. Because everyone’s stake in these systems is so high, people have lots of ideas and expectations. So setting up infrastructure is a place where consulting carefully and accommodating as many ideas as possible will win gratitude and respect. See Section 8 (Sharing Decision Making) for ideas about how to set up teams with clear “charges” and boundaries. Then invite them to work through these processes to improve your infrastructure systems on behalf of their colleagues.

Good luck! Have fun packing thoughtfully for your trip!

