

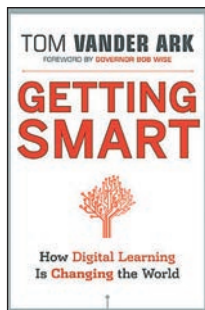
**Getting Smart: How Digital Learning Is Changing the World.**

Tom Vander Ark. Jossey-Bass, 2012, 190 pages.

**T**he technology revolution transformed business and entertainment and will have an equally profound impact on learning," writes Tom Vander Ark in *Getting Smart: How Digital Learning Is Changing the World*. "Now that anyone can learn nearly anything nearly anywhere for free or cheap, all bets are off. The learning race, not the arms race, will define the future."

In this book, Vander Ark presents readers with a view of the future of education and the power of digital learning. He predicts the future of technological advances and digital learning, the impact on educational policies, and most importantly, the impact on the way we educate students.

He describes how digital learning, which reaches a far larger audience



than that found within the confines of the classroom, can provide customized curriculum and pedagogy; motivational experiences that are challenging and meaningful;

and teachers, books, materials, and tools for all learners.

As a former superintendent, Vander Ark recognizes the layers of bureaucracy embedded in school systems and the distinctions between the inner-workings of the private and public sectors. The author rightly points out that we need to change the way we conduct business in public education, from policymaking to budgetary consideration to classroom instruction—essentially changing the job description of a teacher.

Educators, Vander Ark contends,

need to encourage entrepreneurship and a new generation of learning tools. He supports that bold statement with real-life examples of digital learning currently being used in education. "Learning is the big change lever," he writes. "In the long run our only hope for a sustainable future is helping more people get smart. That's why I wrote this book."

Read carefully through the text to learn about the opportunities digital learning will afford your students. Do not miss the Getting Smart Toolkit on the practical aspects of how to expand digital learning in your school system.

Not convinced? Read the Questions and Answers section where you will undoubtedly find not only the answers to your questions, but the inspiration to rethink education.

*Reviewed by Anne Rullan, Executive Director for Curriculum and Instruction, Stony Brook, New York.*

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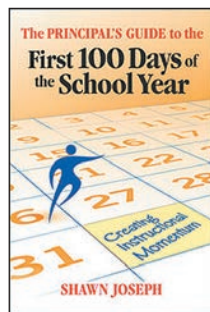
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**The Principal's Guide to the First 100 Days of the School Year.** Shawn Joseph. Eye On Education Inc, 2012, 126 pages.

The first one hundred days of a new adventure can seem, initially, as if you are in for a long, daunting road. But in *The Principal's Guide to the First 100 Days of the School Year*, Shawn Joseph successfully develops a logical roadmap that the makers of GPS systems would be proud to have created.

"The research is clear: Excellent principals create the conditions necessary for great schools," Joseph has said. "The first 100 days are critical because it shows the community how you're going to do business over the long haul." Joseph breaks down the hundred day journey into five key areas: Vision, Building Your Team, Understanding Politics, Understanding Your Data, and Stra-



tegic Planning. He is at his best when he reminds readers that they must always consider "think-about" as they work through processes and systems. "Think-about" are the logic and reasoning that principals need to apply to everything they do, such as remembering to "reconcile your beliefs with the beliefs that currently exist in the school." He suggests thinking about the existing culture prior to starting any change process, and "addressing the first steps of change as a conversation about excellence."

Joseph follows a logical, linear progression as he maps out his hundred day plan. However, the reality is that sitting and writing

about what to do during your first

one hundred days is a great deal simpler than finding the time to perform the processes. In practice, Joseph's suggestions would equate to 20-hour days. A more realistic title might have been: *Your First Year and a Half of School!* Little time is offered or suggested by Joseph for assessment of practices, reevaluation, and new starts to address lingering issues.

Overall, *The Principal's Guide* successfully maps out the big picture, as well as the smaller details, of a principal's journey. Joseph's sample letters, templates, and surveys are succinct, applicable, and professional, resulting in a book that is informative, easy to read, and at times witty, even charming.

*Reviewed by Don Sternberg, Principal, Wantagh Elementary School, Wantagh, New York.*

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