

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT – LEADER PREPARATION

Contents

Leaders for Productive Schools

New Approaches in Preparing School Leaders

Research for Leaders: The National College for School Leadership

School Leadership Standards

Leaders for Productive Schools

J Murphy, S N Elliott, E B Goldring and A C Porter, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, USA

© 2010 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

In this article, we develop a portrait of leaders for productive schools, or what we refer to elsewhere as leadership for learning (Murphy *et al.*, 2006). It is this type of leadership that is closely associated with schools in which all youngsters reach ambitious academic targets of performance. We draw our portrait from the school effectiveness and school-improvement literature. We capture the knowledge base of new leadership for new schools in eight dimensions and 30 functions (Table 1).

Vision for Learning

Leaders in high-performing schools devote considerable energy to “the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996: 10). On the development end of the continuum, leaders ensure that the vision and mission of the school are crafted with and among stakeholders. They also ensure that a variety of sources of data that illuminate student learning are used in the forging of vision and goals. In particular, they make certain that (1) assessment data related to student learning, (2) demographic data pertaining to students and their families, and (3) information on patterns of opportunity to learn are featured in the development process.

Effective leaders facilitate the creation of a school vision that reflects high and appropriate standards of learning, a belief in the educability of all students, and high levels of personal and organizational performance. They emphasize ambitious goals, ones that call for improvement over the *status quo*. In particular, instructionally anchored leaders make certain that goals are focused on students, feature student learning and achievement, and are clearly defined.

They ensure that responsibility for achieving targets is made explicit and that timelines for achieving objectives are specified. In short, they make sure that the school vision is translated into specific, measurable, and concrete end results. They also ensure that the resources needed to meet goals are clearly identified – and made available to the school community.

Effective principals and other school-based leaders articulate the vision through personal modeling and by communicating with others in and around the organization. On the first front, they are adept at making the school vision central to their own daily work. They demonstrate through their actions the organization’s commitment to the values and beliefs at the heart of the mission as well as to the specific activities needed to reach goals. On the second issue, communication, instructionally grounded leaders work ceaselessly to promote the school’s mission and agenda to staff, students, parents, and members of the extended school community (e.g., business and religious leaders, district office staff). Indeed, effective leaders are masters in keeping vision, mission, and goals in the forefront of everyone’s attention and at the center of everyone’s work. To accomplish this, they engage a wide array of formal and informal avenues of exchange and employ a variety of techniques (e.g., symbols and ceremonies).

Leaders for productive schools are especially well versed at translating vision into operation and in stewarding the school’s vision. They are careful monitors (1) ensuring a continuous examination of assumptions, beliefs, and values; (2) assessing implementation of goals; and (3) evaluating the impact of school objectives on organizational performance and student learning. These leaders recognize, celebrate, and reward the contributions of community members to the development, the implementation, and, most importantly, the realization of school goals. At the same time,

Table 1 Leadership for Learning

<i>Vision for learning</i>
• Developing vision
• Articulating vision
• Implementing vision
• Stewarding vision
<i>Instructional program</i>
• Knowledge and involvement
• Hiring and allocating staff
• Supporting staff
• Instructional time
<i>Curricular program</i>
• Knowledge and involvement
• Expectations, standards
• Opportunity to learn
• Curriculum alignment
<i>Assessment program</i>
• Knowledge and involvement
• Assessment procedures
• Monitoring instruction and curriculum
• Communication and use of data
<i>Communities of learning</i>
• Professional development
• Communities of professional practice
• Community anchored schools
<i>Resource allocation and use</i>
• Acquiring resources
• Allocating resources
• Using resources
<i>Organizational culture</i>
• Production emphasis
• Learning environment
• Personalized environment
• Continuous improvement
<i>Social advocacy</i>
• Stakeholder engagement
• Diversity
• Environmental context
• Ethics

they are not wanted to overlook shortcomings and failures. Certainly a critical dimension of stewarding is seeing to it that school vision and school goals shape routine school activities and anchor organizational systems and structures. On a personal front, shepherding occurs when leaders act as keepers and promoters of the vision; maintain enthusiasm and a sense of optimism, especially in periods of waning energy; and inspire others to break through barriers to make the school vision a reality.

Instructional Program

Leaders in highly productive schools have a strong orientation to and affinity for the core technology of their business – learning and teaching. In the area of pedagogy, they are knowledgeable about and deeply involved in the instructional program of the school and are heavily invested in instruction, spending considerable time on

the teaching function. They model the importance of teaching by being directly involved in the design and implementation of the instructional program. They pay attention to teaching, visiting classrooms, and working with groups of teachers on instructional issues, both in formal and informal settings.

Leaders in schools where all youngsters reach ambitious learning targets realize that teachers are the keystone of quality education. Therefore, they devote considerable time and undertake much careful planning to guarantee that the school is populated with excellent teachers, and with colleagues whose values and instructional frameworks are consistent with the mission and the culture of the school. Instructionally centered leaders are also diligent in assigning teachers to various responsibilities. These women and men allocate this critical resource based on educational criteria, especially student needs, rather than on less-appropriate foundations such as staff seniority and school politics.

Instructionally grounded leaders devote abundant time to supporting colleagues in their efforts to strengthen teaching and learning in and across classrooms. Foremost, they are aggressive in identifying and removing barriers that prevent colleagues from doing their work well. They provide intellectual stimulation and make certain that teachers have a high-quality stream of job-embedded opportunities to expand, enhance, and refine their repertoires of instructional skills. They also make sure that the materials that teachers require to perform their jobs are on hand in sufficient quantity and in a timely fashion. Consistent with the involvement and investment theme, effective leaders make themselves available to, and demonstrate personal interest in, the staff.

We know from the literature that feedback about performance is essential to the learning process, and leaders in high-performing schools are diligent about providing this information to colleagues on a consistent basis and in a timely manner. In supplying performance feedback, these women and men (1) rely on personal knowledge developed through numerous classroom observations, both informal and formal; and (2) employ a variety of supervisory and evaluation strategies. They make student learning the calculus of the exchange process. Effective leaders are especially expert in opening up a wide assortment of improvement opportunities for teachers. They are relentless in counseling poor teachers to leave the classroom. In a related vein, instructionally grounded leaders aggressively monitor the instructional program in its entirety, assuring alignment between learning standards and objectives and classroom instruction.

Academic learning time is the caldron in which student achievement materializes, and effective leaders work tirelessly with staff to ensure that this precious resource is maximized. They begin by making sure that the great bulk of time is devoted to instructional activities and that non-instructional time is kept to a minimum. They also see to it

that the majority of instructional time is dedicated to core academic subjects. Within this learning space, they work with teachers to accentuate the use of instructional strategies that maximize student engagement at high levels of success. On a parallel track, effective leaders undertake an array of activities that protect valuable instructional time from interruptions, including: (1) assigning academic subject time slots that are least likely to be disturbed by school events; (2) protecting teachers from distractions from the school office; (3) developing, implementing, and monitoring procedures to reduce student tardiness and absenteeism; and (4) ensuring that teachers are punctual. They also foster more productive use of time by coordinating time usage among teachers and across classes (e.g., all language arts instruction unfolding during the first 2 h of the day).

Curricular Program

Effective leaders are also knowledgeable about and deeply involved in the school's curricular program. They work with colleagues to ensure that the school is defined by a rigorous curricular program in general and that each student's program in particular is of high quality. On the first issue, they establish high standards and expectations in the various curricular domains consistent with blueprints crafted by professional associations and learned societies. On the second topic, they ensure that opportunity to learn is maximized for each youngster. These leaders are also diligent in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's curricular program.

In the array of factors that define high-performing schools, curriculum alignment enjoys a position of exceptional prominence. Moreover, effective leaders are especially attentive to creating a tightly coupled curriculum throughout the school. This means that they ensure that objectives (standards), instruction, curriculum materials, and assessments are all carefully coordinated. It also means that all special programs (e.g., bilingual education) are brought into the gravitational field of the regular program. Finally, it means that there is a high degree of coordination (1) across subjects within grades, (2) across grade levels and phases of schooling (e.g., from the elementary to the middle school), and (3) among teachers within and across departments and grade levels.

Assessment Program

Assessment systems in schools with effective leaders are characterized by a variety of distinguishing elements. First, they are comprehensive. They address classroom- and school-based activity. They feature the use of a wide variety of monitoring and data collection strategies,

both formal and informal, that is, they ensure that student learning is measured using an assortment of techniques. For example, comprehensive designs often include teacher-record-keeping systems, end-of-level or end-of-unit reports, student work products, criterion-referenced tests, and standardized measures of student performance. They also highlight information gleaned from direct observations in classrooms. Second, they disaggregate information on the important conditions and outcomes of schooling (e.g., program placement of students and test results) by relevant biosocial characteristics of students (e.g., gender, race, and class). Third, they are constructed in ways that foster the triangulation of data from multiple sources in arriving at judgments about the effectiveness of curricular and instructional programs and organizational operations. Finally, as alluded to above, these systems highlight tight alignment between classroom-based and school-based methods of assessing student learning. We close here where we began, that in schools with effective assessment programs, the fingerprints of school leaders are distinctly visible.

The literature also informs us that effective leaders are master craftspersons in the communication and use of the data that is the lifeblood of the assessment system. On the issue of use, instructionally grounded leaders ensure that assessment data is at the heart of (1) mission development, (2) instructional planning, (3) the evaluation of the curricular program, (4) the identification of and the design of services for special needs students, (5) monitoring progress on school goals and improvement efforts, and (6) the evaluation of school staff. On the communication front, effective leaders provide teachers and parents with assessment results on a regular basis. They also unpack the meaning of results with staff – as a body of the whole, in appropriate groups, and individually. They make certain that information about student progress is regularly reported to students and parents in an accessible form, at multiple times, across an array of forums, and in multiple formats.

Communities of Learning

Effective school leaders are especially skillful in creating learning organizations and fostering the development of communities of learning. They are vigorous promoters of professional development, they nurture the growth of communities of professional practice, and they shape school organizations to adhere to the principles of community. In the area of staff development, effective leaders thoughtfully attend to their own growth, modeling a life-long commitment to learning for their colleagues. Unlike many peers, these women and men focus their learning on issues of school improvement. They assume an active role in planning and evaluating specific staff-learning activities and the overall professional-development system of the

school. Attending to professional development is a significant piece of their work portfolios.

In working with colleagues, instructionally centered leaders establish an expectation that the continual expansion of one's knowledge and skills focused on helping students succeed is the norm at the school. These leaders also demonstrate a dedication and a willingness to assist teachers in strengthening their instructional skills. They furnish needed resources to teachers, including support to help teachers gain new knowledge (e.g., they fund workshops, hire coaches, and facilitate intra- and interschool visitations) and they provide the materials teachers require to implement new skills in the classroom. These leaders are committed to ensuring that their colleagues have both direct and indirect, both formal and informal, guidance as they work to integrate skills learned during professional development into their portfolios of instructional behaviors. They are well versed in providing regular incidental interventions – casual conversations and suggestions of ideas – that assist teachers in their efforts to improve instruction. As we outline below, they create systems and procedures that nurture this type of informal learning throughout the school, mechanisms that promote the exchange of professional dialog about strengthening instruction and improving the school.

Instructionally centered leaders forge a structure for professional development from the principles of learning theory and models of best practice. They make certain that a robust system for developing staff expertise is in place and that each staff member has the learning experience necessary to grow his or her instructional skills. They ensure that development opportunities and experiences flow from data on student achievement, link carefully with district and school goals, are integrated into the culture of the school, and focus on student learning. These leaders also make sure that learning activities are scaffolded on the principles of adult learning.

Leaders in effective schools actively promote the formation of a learning organization, the development of staff cohesion and support, and the growth of communities of professional practice. At the broadest level, these leaders endeavor to create a culture of collaboration and the systems, operations, and policies that provide the infrastructure for that collegial culture. At this level, they also are active in building shared beliefs about the importance of community. They nurture collaborative processes (e.g., shared decision making), forge schedules (e.g., common planning time), and create organizational structures (e.g., team leadership) that permit and encourage shared mission and direction, collaborative work, and mutual accountability for school goals and student learning. These leaders are particularly attentive to ensuring that there are a variety of mechanisms for teachers to communicate among themselves. Besides, to be sure, these women and men are active participants in the various

school learning communities, often serving a key linking and pollinating role in the process. They understand and help others understand that communities of professional practice offer the most appropriate caldrons for professional learning and the forging of new instructional skills. Finally, they take advantage of the fact that they are in a unique position to garner and allocate resources to bring communities of professional practice to life.

Leaders in high-performing schools also often promote a shared or team approach to leading the organization. The DNA of this more distributed conception of management – of pushing leadership outward to students, parents, and especially staff and helping others assume the mantle of leadership – is the privileging of expertise, rather than role, in managing the school. Effective leaders are adept in meeting this challenge. They involve others in the crafting and implementation of important decisions. They empower others and provide faculty with voice, both formal and informal, in running the school, not simply their own classrooms. They delegate often and effectively and often form leadership teams to assist in shaping the vision and in managing the operations of the school, especially in and around the core technology.

Resource Allocation and Use

High-performing school leaders have a gift for acquiring, allocating, and using resources to promote student success. Indeed, researchers in the areas of school improvement and instructional leadership consistently report that high-performing school leaders are more successful than their peers in locating and securing additional resources for their schools. In particular, these women and men use the formal and informal channels at their disposal to influence district-level decision making to better the competitive position of their schools in the distribution of resources. They also show adeptness in attracting additional funds and materials from the larger school community. Evidence is also emerging that effective leaders are more skillful than their peers in building up the stock of social capital at the school level.

On the allocation and use issues, two critical dynamics are in play in high-performing schools. First, leaders here assiduously link resource deployment and use it to attain the mission and goals of the school. All requests and all commitments are not equal in effective schools. Financial, human, and material resources are all directed in the service of improved student learning. Second, effective leaders are masters at taking the dimensions of work that have historically occupied centerstage in school administration – management, politics, organization, finance – and ensuring that they are no longer ends in themselves but assume importance to the extent that they strengthen the quality of the instructional and curricular program and enhance student learning.

Organizational Culture

Effective organizations in all sectors, including education, are marked by a strong production emphasis (Bossert *et al.*, 1982: 37). And consistent with the core theme of this article, leadership is a key factor in explaining the presence of this organizational orientation toward outcomes. On the front end of this condition, leaders in high-performing schools work ceaselessly to create an environment of high-performance expectations for self, staff, and students. They model risk taking in the service of attaining important goals. They regularly communicate a concern for and interest in staff performance and student achievement. They establish clearly defined, school-wide academic standards to bring expectations to life. They carefully ensure that these high expectations are translated into school policies and behavioral expectations. These leaders make certain that expectations are decoupled from beliefs about biosocial characteristics of students.

On the other side of production emphasis, effective leaders maintain school accountability. They hold everyone – students, teachers, parents, and school administrators – responsible for achieving school goals and reaching targets in the area of student performance, providing special weight to the contributions of teachers and other professional staff at the school. While these leaders acknowledge the value of hard work, they clearly couple success to performance.

Instructionally grounded leaders are the catalysts in school-based efforts at continuous improvement. They understand and communicate that complacency is the enemy of improvement, that *status quo* is more tightly linked to decline than to growth. These leaders confront stagnation. They ensure that the school systematically reviews and adopts more productive strategies to accomplish important goals. They take risks and encourage others to do so in the quest for better education. They act entrepreneurially to support school-improvement efforts. They encourage initiative and proactiveness. They make sure that the assessment program we described earlier is a driver in the work of continuous school improvement.

As with many of the areas we explore in this article, leaders have a dual role in the domain of learning environment. On the one hand, they demonstrate what is valued through their own behaviors. Thus, effective leaders model appropriate behavior by personally enforcing discipline with students and by confronting problems quickly and forcefully. On the other hand, these leaders are responsible for the creation and operation of systems and structures and the performance of colleagues. In this area, they ensure that operations, rules, and procedures to maintain discipline and order in the school community are developed and monitored on regular basis.

There is a fair amount of research that shows that impersonality reigns in many schools in America, especially

secondary schools. That is, students are neither well known nor particularly well cared for. Since schools have been constructed using institutional and hierarchical blueprints, both of which feature impersonality, this condition should come as a surprise to no one. Yet, the fact that it can be explained is not much consolation to the youngsters in these schools. On the other side of the ledger, we know that in schools where academic and social learning thrive high, academic press is almost always coupled with high personalization. At the broadest level, this indicates that each student is well known and cared for, that each youngster feels valued and important at school.

Recognition and rewards also fill a central cell in the personalization design in high-performing schools. In these communities, an abundance of classroom-based and school-wide recognition systems and mechanisms are in play, systems that are carefully designed to be reinforcing. Rewards are distributed frequently and they reach a high percentage of students. They are seen as meaningful and important throughout the school community, especially to students. They are often public in nature. They highlight the accomplishments of individuals and groups. And while they unquestionably privilege academic accomplishments, rewards are provided for success in a wide array of areas. We close our narrative here with an important reminder: Leadership is the central ingredient in ensuring that these frameworks of meaningful student engagement and widespread rewards and recognition become defining elements of school culture.

Social Advocacy

Working from a research base that overlaps quite extensively with the one we examine here, the framers of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards for school leaders concluded that one of the defining characteristics of highly productive leaders is that they “understand, respond to, and influence the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context of schooling to promote the success of all students” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996: 25). That is, they actively manipulate the environment in the service of better education for youngsters and their families. The central issue here is understanding contextual trends and influences and their potential impacts on the school and the larger community, particularly how these environments support or hinder learning in classrooms. In their role as social advocates, effective leaders proactively respond to external policy initiatives (e.g., speak at public forums, address civic organizations) to ensure that public policy is advantageous to the children and youngsters in their schools – and their families.

Effective leaders demonstrate an understanding of and a commitment to the benefits that diversity offers to the

school. They translate this knowledge and commitment into work that creates educational experiences that honor diversity (e.g., the use of culturally rich educational materials) while strengthening instruction and improving student achievement. As we see below, these leaders are also adept at building and using channels of communication that promote ongoing dialog with diverse groups of stakeholders.

According to the literature, most noticeably the ISLLC standards, effective leaders “act with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996: 18). On one front, the authors of the standards note that this means that leaders fulfill legal and contractual obligations and apply laws and district and school policies and procedures fairly, wisely, and considerately. It means that they guarantee the privacy rights of students and recognize and respect the legitimate authority of others. At a deeper level, it means leaders treat others fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect – and they establish the expectation that others in the school community act in a similar manner.

On a personal basis, effective leaders are more cognizant than their peers of their own values and beliefs and they shape their behavior in accord with personal and professional codes of ethics. They are more reflective and self-critical about their own practice and its impact on others in the extended school community. They know the difference between using office and position for one’s own gain and for the benefit of the school community and they honor the latter. These leaders serve as role models in terms of accepting responsibility for what happens to children and families in their school community.

Finally, the research on high-performing schools and instructionally oriented leaders reveals that effective leaders are attuned to and expert at linking the school to parents and others in the extended school community. Much more so than peers, these leaders weigh connections in terms of their value in enhancing the academic and social learning of students. That is, they engage families and other community members in the service of school goals, the learning agenda, and student performance. Inside the school, these women and men model community collaboration for staff, establish norms about the importance of parent connections, and provide opportunities for staff to develop the collaborative skills needed to work effectively with parents. They also ensure that information about family and community concerns, expectations, and interests inform school decisions.

Effective leaders craft and work from a comprehensive design about school–community relations that is anchored by the school’s academic mission. The plan is systematic, not simply a collection of *ad hoc* and unrelated activities. In the wider community, these leaders develop relationships with influential actors in the religious, business, and political sectors. They are actively involved in the school community and communicate frequently with stakeholders therein. They employ multiple channels and a variety of

forums to operationalize these connections. Their objectives are to inform, promote, learn, and link – to ensure that the school and the community serve one another as resources. On the extended community front, effective leaders are also specially attentive to building bridges with (1) other youth and family–service agencies that can promote better lives for youngsters and their families and (2) the media that can help promote the image of the school.

For effective leaders, connections with parents occupy a strategic position in the algorithm of stakeholder engagement. Leaders communicate with families regularly and through a variety of channels. They create programs and strategies that bring parents from the periphery to the inner circle of school operations.

Acknowledgment

This article was developed with the help of a Wallace Foundation grant on leadership assessment to Vanderbilt University. The generous support of the Wallace Foundation is gratefully acknowledged.

Bibliography

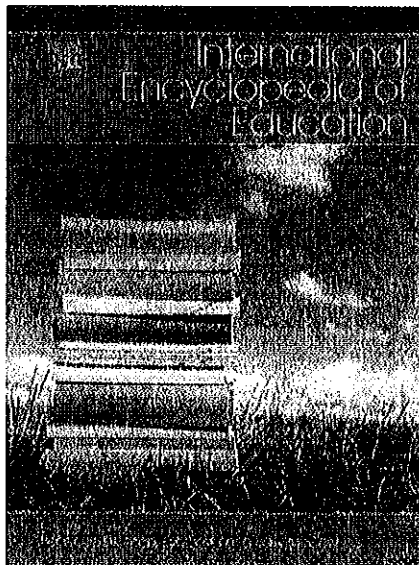
- Bossert, S. T., Dwyer, D. C., Rowan, B., and Lee, G. V. (1982). The instructional management role of the principal. *Educational Administration Quarterly* 18(3), 34–64.
- Council of Chief State School Officers (1996). *Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium: Standards for School Leaders*. Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.
- Murphy, J., Elliott, S. N., Goldring, E., and Porter, A. C. (2006). Learning-centered leadership: A conceptual foundation. *Paper Prepared for the Wallace Foundation*. New York.

Further Reading

- Barker, B. (2001). Do leaders matter? *Educational Review* 53(1), 65–76.
- Barnett, K. and McCormick, J. (2004). Leadership and individual principal–teacher relationships in schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly* 40(3), 406–434.
- Beck, L. G. and Murphy, J. (1996). *The Four Imperatives of a Successful School*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Knapp, M. S., Copland, M. A., Ford, B., et al. (2003). *Leading for Learning Sourcebook: Concepts and Examples*. Seattle, WA: Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, University of Washington.
- Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S., and Wahlstrom, K. (2004). How leadership influences student learning. *Paper Commissioned by the Wallace Foundation*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.
- Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., and McNulty, B. A. (2005). *School Leadership That Works: From Research to Results*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Murphy, J. (1990). Principal instructional leadership. In Lotto, L. L. and Thurston, P. W. (eds.) *Advances in Educational Administration: Changing Perspectives on the School*, vol. 1, part B, pp 163–200. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Murphy, J., Beck, L., Crawford, M., Hodges, A., and McGaughy, C. L. (2001). *The Productive High School: Creating Personalized Academic Communities*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Sammons, P., Hillman, J., and Mortimore, P. (1995). *Key Characteristics of Effective Schools: A Review of School Effectiveness Research*. London: Institute of Education.

**Provided for non-commercial research and educational use.
Not for reproduction, distribution or commercial use.**

This article was originally published in the *International Encyclopedia of Education* published by Elsevier, and the attached copy is provided by Elsevier for the author's benefit and for the benefit of the author's institution, for non-commercial research and educational use including without limitation use in instruction at your institution, sending it to specific colleagues who you know, and providing a copy to your institution's administrator.



All other uses, reproduction and distribution, including without limitation commercial reprints, selling or licensing copies or access, or posting on open internet sites, your personal or institution's website or repository, are prohibited. For exceptions, permission may be sought for such use through Elsevier's permissions site at:

<http://www.elsevier.com/locate/permissionusematerial>

Murphy J, Elliott S N, Goldring E B and Porter A C (2010), Leaders for Productive Schools. In: Penelope Peterson, Eva Baker, Barry McGaw, (Editors), *International Encyclopedia of Education*. volume 4, pp. 746-751. Oxford: Elsevier.