The Alaska School Leaders Academy Mentor Handbook was developed by Metis Education Consulting with permission given to ACSA/ASDN to use all materials.
Communication Techniques & Three Stances

Develops *interpersonal skills to cultivate working relationships* and to mobilize individuals or groups to action that results in improvement.

It has been our experience that we live in a society where folks like to interrupt others, get the last word in, stray off topic, and not work at being an active listener. Noted below are Three Stances to enhance interactions.

1) Coaching P-P-P (pausing, paraphrasing, and posing questions)*
2) Calibrating (3-point conversations)
3) Consulting (asking permission and not telling)

**Coaching** is the use of P-P-P in order to let a colleague speak without interruption and use paraphrasing to make sure we understand his or her thinking. We paraphrase before we pose questions. We have to be active listeners in order to paraphrase colleagues.

**Calibrating or 3-Point Conversations** *(Michael Grinder)* uses data or specific sources of information (such as a goal-setting statement) because they are:
- Not as personal
- Less emotional
- The “data” is the topic of conversation, not the person

**Consulting** is where we ask permission to offer ideas to colleagues. We discuss the resources that are available and brainstorm options. We need to be careful not to offer the ideas we like or think a colleague should use. Consulting is a stance. Consultant is a role.

* P-P-P technique used in Cognitive Coaching
Coaching P-P-P (default position)

The Coaching Stance pattern is Pausing, Paraphrasing, and Posing questions.

1. Pausing (demonstrates listening and provides thinking time)
2. Paraphrasing (understanding)-when appropriate get “sign-off”
   - Clarifying and acknowledging
   - Summarizing and organizing
3. Posing good questions (not advice in disguise)
4. Establish rapport to develop trust
5. Set-aside the mini-me syndrome, advice giving, and “my” solutions

Three types of pausing or “wait time”

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<tr>
<th>Wait Time I</th>
<th>Wait Time II</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pause after asking a question</td>
<td>Pause after group members respond</td>
<td>Pause before your own response or questions</td>
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<td>• To allow thinking time</td>
<td>• To allow time for retrieval of additional and related information</td>
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<td>• To signal support for thinking</td>
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<td>• To model thoughtfulness and</td>
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<td>• To demonstrate your belief in group members’ capacities for thinking</td>
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<td>• A need to think before responding</td>
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Mary Budd Rowe (1986)
Calibrating (*3-Point Conversation*)

Sample Documents to use for Calibrating:

1. Goal Setting Rubric
2. Working Agreements and Norms of Collaborative Work

*3-Point Conversation by Michael Grinder*

- Not as personal
- Less emotional
- The “data” is the topic of conversation, not the person

Consulting (a stance not a role)

- Ask permission (transition into consulting)
- Discuss resources
- Provide options (brainstorming)
- Build capacity
- Guidance and teaching
- Assistance and support

The Consulting Stance is used when a person lacks resources, experience, and/or time. Mentors use consulting intentionally as a stance.
**FIGURE 1.1**
**STEPHANIE’S BLEND: THE I-C-I KNOWLEDGE DOMAINS**

- **Cognitive**
  - Instructional literacy *(learning & teaching)*
  - Organizational literacy *(Management & change)*

- **Interpersonal**
  - Self-awareness
  - Self-management
  - Clarity of purpose & beliefs
  - Sustainable fit of role & person

- **Intrapersonal**
  - Other-awareness
  - Relationship-building
  - Communication
  - Mobilization of others
Figure 1.2
Core Knowledge Areas of Leadership Performance

Knowledge Domain Core Knowledge Areas

Instructional Literacy
- What is effective learning?
- Models and theories of teaching, learning, and assessment for children & adults

Organizational Literacy
- What makes a school effective as an organization?
- Models and theories of school organization, effectiveness, and leadership

Cognitive

Forming Relationships
- How do I cultivate robust working relationships with and among others?
- Skills, sensitivities, and frameworks that help form working relationships with individuals and groups

Mobilizing Others
- How do I mobilize others to act in ways that improve the learning of children?
- Skills, sensitivities, and frameworks that help me generate in others the will and the ability to change

Philosophical Platform
- What beliefs and values guide my work as a leader?
- Core principles with strong rationales regarding the four aspects of leadership listed under Cognitive and Interpersonal

Interpersonal

Self-Awareness & Self-Management
- Do I understand myself well enough to choose wisely how I will act as a leader?
- Skills, sensitivities, and frameworks that help me understand how my thoughts and feelings shape my actions with others

Intrapersonal

Self-Assessment and Career Choices
- Do I understand the assets and the liabilities I bring to leadership work?
- Have I found a fitting role that will make my leadership productive and sustainable for both me and the school/team/group?
## Side-by-Side Comparison of Robinson’s Capabilities and Leithwood’s Leadership Pathways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Robinson’s Three Capabilities (Finer-grained Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions)¹</th>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Leithwood’s Three of Four* Leadership Pathways²</th>
<th>Attributes</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Building Relational Trust</strong></td>
<td>Develop the trust that is essential for doing the hard work of improving teaching and learning (can’t achieve much on your own), engage others in the work that delivers for learners; respect (valuing the ideas of others), trustworthiness, competence, and integrity</td>
<td>Emotions Path (emotions direct cognition)</td>
<td>Commitment, networking between staff, teacher efficacy, collective efficacy (leads to persistence), stress, trust, morale</td>
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<td><strong>Applying Relevant Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>Deepen teacher knowledge, develop expertise to do the work, using knowledge about effective teaching, teacher learning, and school organization to make high-quality administrative decisions</td>
<td>Rational Path</td>
<td>Quality of instruction, student learning (standards), curriculum, problem-solving capabilities, “technical core”, establishing high expectations, shared goals about academic achievement, orderly environment</td>
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<td><strong>Solving Complex Problems</strong></td>
<td>All about context specific to each school, take many conditions into account for making decisions, discern challenges and craft solutions that adequately address them</td>
<td>Organizational Path</td>
<td>School infrastructure, professional networks, structures to support collaboration, instructional time, complexity of teachers’ workload, opportunities for teachers’ growth, time devoted to instruction</td>
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*Family Path Not Included

Seven Norms of Collaborative Work

1. **Pausing**
   Pausing before responding or asking a question allows time for thinking and enhances dialogue, discussion and decision-making.

2. **Paraphrasing**
   Using a paraphrase starter that is comfortable for you. “So . . .” or “You’re feeling . . .” or “You’re thinking . . .” and following the starter with a paraphrase assists members of the group to hear and understand one another.

3. **Posing questions**
   Two intentions of posing questions are to explore and specify thinking. Questions may be posed to explore perceptions, assumptions and interpretations and invite others to inquire into their own thinking.

4. **Putting ideas on the table**
   Ideas are the heart of a meaningful dialogue. Label the intention of your comments. For example, you might say, “Here is one idea...” or “One thought I have is...” or “Here is a possible approach . . .”

5. **Providing data**
   Providing data in a variety of forms supports group members in constructing shared understanding from their work. Data have no meaning beyond that which we make of them; shared meaning develops from collaboratively exploring, analyzing and interpreting data.

6. **Paying attention to self and others**
   Meaningful dialogue is facilitated when each group member is conscious of self and of others, and is aware of not only what he or she is saying, but also how it is said and how others are responding.

7. **Presuming positive intentions**
   Assuming that others’ intentions are positive promotes and facilitates meaningful dialogue and eliminates unintentional putdowns. Using positive intentions in your speech is one manifestation of this norm.
Template for Establishing Working Agreements

Circle the number on top of the box indicating where you are personally and the number at the bottom indicating where we are as a team.

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Example: **Be present** means speaker has our full attention. (*Cell phones and computers are turned off, grading papers is reserved for another time, side bar conversations are inappropriate.*)

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<tr>
<td><strong>“Golden Rule” – Do unto others</strong></td>
<td>Rotate facilitators / known facilitators</td>
<td>Ask questions</td>
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<td><strong>No side conversations</strong></td>
<td>Focus on critical tasks</td>
<td>Engage in discussions</td>
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<td><strong>Begin and end on time</strong></td>
<td>Establish time frame for discussions</td>
<td>Ask for and offer feedback</td>
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<td><strong>Active participation by all</strong></td>
<td>Don’t judge ideas during brainstorm</td>
<td>Encourage others to ask questions and share ideas</td>
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<td><strong>Leave the past in the past</strong></td>
<td>End on time</td>
<td>Offer different, perhaps unpopular perspectives</td>
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<td><strong>Silence cell phones/pagers</strong></td>
<td>No interruptions; don’t dominate</td>
<td>Listen actively</td>
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<td><strong>Deal with issues, not personalities</strong></td>
<td>Teams for discussion breakout</td>
<td>Seek to understand</td>
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<td><strong>“Time out” when needed</strong></td>
<td>OK to walk around during meeting</td>
<td>Disagree respectfully</td>
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<td><strong>Be committed to the process</strong></td>
<td>Time keeper</td>
<td>Provide options</td>
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<td><strong>Be open and honest</strong></td>
<td>Raise your hand to discuss</td>
<td>Be open to changing your position</td>
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<td><strong>“What you see here, what you say here, when you leave here, let it stay here.”</strong></td>
<td>Everyone has a fair chance to speak their mind (expand discussion time)</td>
<td>Promote creative ideas and approaches</td>
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<td><strong>No side meetings</strong></td>
<td>Time for discussion is up to facilitator</td>
<td>Avoid aggressive language, posture, and tone</td>
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<td><strong>Have fun and relax</strong></td>
<td>Agreement on voting item</td>
<td>Practice candor</td>
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<td><strong>Be on time</strong></td>
<td>Include discussion in minute’s comments</td>
<td>Develop and express trust</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Established break times</strong></td>
<td>Stay focused and on time</td>
<td>Refer to meeting norms</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Be courteous</strong></td>
<td>No rehashing</td>
<td>Ask for information</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>State all concerns at meeting</strong></td>
<td>Table/parking lot for future discussion</td>
<td>Express concerns</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Listen</strong></td>
<td>Please turn off all cell phones and pagers for the duration of the meeting</td>
<td>Balance inquiry and advocacy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Agenda beforehand w/relevant information</strong></td>
<td>Focus on strategic issues</td>
<td>Honor confidentiality</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Review meeting action items, include dates and times</strong></td>
<td>Share ideas</td>
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Leadership Team Working Agreements

SUPPORT EMOTIONAL SAFETY & TRUST

• Honest Dialogue
• Safe Environment

HONOR THE DECISION MAKING PROGRESS

• Broad Input
• Equal Voice
• Multiple Prospectives
• Discussion, Dialogue & Decisions

COMMIT TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

• Within Departments & Groups
• Between Departments & Groups
• Common Voice (talking points)
• Measured Responsiveness (Reflective, Appropriate, Timely)

MODEL & ADDRESS PROFESSIONALISM

• Confidentiality
• Positivity
ACSA School Leader and Mentor Performance Agreement

The ACSA mentor agrees:

- To honor confidentiality with each school leader
- To provide one-on-one support for each school leader via phone, on-site, and at ACSA sponsored activities and events
- To utilize mentoring and coaching strategies
- To respond to the school leader in a timely manner between mentoring sessions via telephone or email
- To honor the demanding schedule of each school leader
- To commit to supporting the success and effectiveness of each school leader as the primary focus and purpose of the program

The School Leader agrees:

- To fully avail him/herself of the support offered by an ACSA mentor
- To work with the assigned mentor to identify meaningful goals
- To approach the mentoring relationship with openness and honesty
- To utilize and apply the written materials, resources, and strategies made available by the ACSA mentor
- To be available for agreed upon phone mentoring conversations and site visits
- To participate in designated ACSA professional learning activities

School Leader: ____________________________________________

ACSA Mentor: _______________________________________________

Date: _____________________
The Entry Protocol is designed to be used during a conversation and will take at least 30 to 45 minutes. It is not intended to send to a principal to complete. The mentor takes notes that will inform the relationship and guide future conversations.

### ACSA Principal Entry Conversation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Mentee:</strong></th>
<th><strong>School:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Date:</strong></th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>An Entry Conversation is...</strong></th>
<th><strong>An Entry Conversation is not...</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o An opportunity to establish rapport</td>
<td>o A conversation with judgment or evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>o A two-way confidential conversation</td>
<td>o A one-way conversation</td>
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<tr>
<td>o A structured conversation for asking open-ended questions that will assist the coach and mentee</td>
<td>o An interrogative interview</td>
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<td>o A chance for coaches to gain an understanding about the mentee’s background</td>
<td>o A gathering of information to be shared inappropriately</td>
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<tr>
<td>o The beginning stage of how to customize contextual support for the mentee</td>
<td>o A onetime sharing of information that is a waste of your time</td>
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### Exploring the existing state

1. Tell a little bit about yourself and your background.
2. What are you most excited about when you consider the new school year?
3. What are you most concerned about?
4. Please describe the size of your school (student population, staff size, size of the community)?
5. What is currently happening for your school in core instruction?
6. What initiatives are you aware of that are currently occurring in your school?
7. Can you describe your staff meeting schedule and calendar of important meetings ahead?
8. What fears do you anticipate the staff having about a new principal in the school(s)?
9. What additional information might you wish to offer to assist us today?
The Entry Protocol is designed to be used during a conversation and will take at least 30 to 45 minutes. It is not intended to send to a superintendent to complete. The mentor takes notes that will inform the relationship and guide future conversations.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ACSA Superintendent Entry Conversation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mentee:</td>
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**An Entry Conversation is...**

- An opportunity to establish rapport
- A two-way confidential conversation
- A structured conversation for asking open-ended questions that will assist the coach and mentee
- A chance for coaches to gain an understanding about the mentee’s background
- The beginning stage of how to customize contextual support for the mentee

**An Entry Conversation is not...**

- A conversation with judgment or evaluation
- A one-way conversation
- An interrogative interview
- A gathering of information to be shared inappropriately
- A onetime sharing of information that is a waste of your time

**Exploring the existing state**

1. Tell a little bit about yourself and your background.

2. What are you most excited about when you consider the new school year?

3. What are you most concerned about?

4. Please describe your district (student population, staff size and leadership experience, size of the community(s), district resources/budget/grants and functions/district staffing)?

5. What is the current board expectations for you and your relationship with them? Election updates?

6. What initiatives/strategic plan/board goals are you aware of that are currently occurring in your district?

7. Can you describe your leadership meeting schedule and calendar of important meetings ahead?

8. What fears do you anticipate the staff/community having about a new superintendent?

9. What additional information might you wish to offer to assist us today?
Leadership Conversation Guide

Productive professional conversations require shape and structure. ACSA aims to assist school leaders develop the capacity to be highly effective.

School Leader_________________________Mentor_________________________Date____________

___Phone call  ___Personal Visit  ___Web-Based

**Step 1: Type of Conversation**
Jointly determine with the school leader within the first ten minutes of conversation. (Whenever possible, process the Problem of the Day as quickly as possible and then focus on long term goals.)

___ Planning/Rehearsal  ___ Problem Resolving  ___ Reflecting

Circle One: New conversation or continuation/follow-up from previous conversation

**Step 2: Goal Progress: The What and The How (__________________)**

**Step 3: Next Steps**
Note commitments stated for mentor and school leader, information needed, and focus for next conversation.

Next Scheduled Conversation: Date:____________Time:____________Type:___________________
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The First Person Goal Setting Process

If you don’t have time to do it right, when will you have time to do it over? - John Wooden

Two Steps to the Goal Setting Process:

- Establishing The What - The topic that a school leader wants to accomplish
- Developing The How - The strategies, processes, and techniques that a school leader uses to accomplish The What

Everyone involved in the goal setting process must be mindful of the need for a tolerance of ambiguity because the entire process involves reflecting, planning, and feedback. The process will result in a valuable action plan that you will rehearse to increase the odds of success.

First Person Goal Setting will begin by reviewing notes from the Entry Conversation and the topics the school leader wants to implement.

Step One (The What) First Person Goal Setting Examples:

Principal: I would like to successfully and thoughtfully implement the new K-6 mathematics program recently adopted by the district.

Superintendent: I would like to implement a communication plan that provides important district information that is timely and accurate to all stakeholders (school board members, principals, teachers, school staff and community members).

Step Two (The How) Action Plan and with Steps or language from the Goal Setting Rubric

Superintendent: I want to develop better group processes because many of our group conversations are led by one person, norms for interaction are not consistently used, and there are too many defensive, off-task, and unproductive conversations. I will introduce the Norms of Collaboration and Working Agreements.
Goal Setting Question Bank for Mentors

Questions to start with a draft goal

“What do you want to learn about this?”

“When you reflect upon acquiring more skill in this area, what might be some of the different kinds of information you want?”

“How will you know when you are on the right track?”

“Whom would you like to get involved in helping you plan to meet your goal?”

“What might be some reasons you selected this goal for you focus?”

“Knowing where you are now, what must you remain mindful of to move forward?”

“What hunches do you have about major roadblocks you may run upon?”

“How will you demonstrate, in your daily planning and use of time, that you are focused on the goal?”

“How might you involve other people in accomplishing this goal?”

“How will you order the steps you will take to reach your goal?”

“What are some of your priorities as you approach this goal?”

“In what ways will you collect evidence that you are taking action regarding effective instruction and student achievement?”

“What risks will you incur in this process and how will you prepare to deal with them?”

“Please describe the kind of thinking you have done in choosing to focus in this area?”

“What kinds of support and feedback might you need?”

“In what ways might you mobilize others in support of this goal?”
“What factors might you have considered while reaching those conclusions?”

“In what ways might you provide evidence that you are indeed taking regular action to meet the goal?”

“What kinds of steps might ensure that you persist over the long haul in pursuing this goal?”

“What sorts of data can you collect that will enable you to measure your progress?”

“Explain how many different ways you tried to think about setting this goal.”

“How will you know when you have met your goal?”

“What have you found to be a challenge as you work to master the concepts encompassed by this goal?”

“What can you do to ensure that you remain open to further learning as you tackle this goal?”

“What could you do to help you to think more about your learning?”

“What can you do to take time for reflecting and thinking about your goal?”

“How can you connect this new information to something you already know?”

“What thoughts are you having about how often you must revisit your goals?”

“In what ways might you be able to share leadership in order to achieve this goal?”

“What kinds of information will you need to collect in order to move forward?”
The Goal Setting Rubric is Used for a Reflecting into Planning Conversation with the Rubric as a Third Point

The Goal Setting Rubric Describes the Many Roles of a School Leader

- **A Tool For Reflection**: Confidential “living document” that provides a sustain focus of conversation throughout the year

- A learning tool and process for school leader that acts a filter to identify a couple of goals (USE ONLY THE SECTION THAT IS NEEDED)

- **Let the School Leader Lead** the conversation if he/she can

- **Paraphrase** in order to Organize, Summarize and PRIORITIZE

- Mentor and School Leader both need a copy

- **Avoid EVALUATIVE language**: High, low, good, bad, points, grade, score, total

- **Use Language**: Emerging, Somewhat Developed, Moderately Developed, Substantially Developed, selected, chose, identified

- **Use Questions Sparingly**: Avoid the sequence-question to question to question and why

- **Explore Reasoning**: Reference specific language in a cell that the school leader selects and then explore their thinking

- **Remember Pace and Lead** (Existing State to the Desired State)
The What: Potential Goal Statement(s)

Examples

Principal: I would like to successfully and thoughtfully implement the new K-6 mathematics program recently adopted by the district.

Superintendent: I would like to implement a communication plan that provides important district information that is timely and accurate to all stakeholders (school board members, principals, teachers, school staff and community members).

My Goal Statement(s)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action Plan</th>
<th>Action Steps</th>
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</table>
Learning Target: Mentors can facilitate the development of one or two draft goal statements from each mentee using the goal setting rubric.

Emerging

- A mentor is able to demonstrate only limited skill in facilitating the process of goal selection and shows limited understanding of the process. The mentor is limited in the following skills: using knowledge of the domains, using mentoring and coaching techniques, moving the mentee through the process, and guiding a mentee to use the goal setting documents to concentrate on one or two goals.

Developing

- A mentor possesses some skill in facilitating the process of goal selection and shows some understanding of the process. The mentor has some ability to deploy the following skills: using knowledge of the domains, employing mentoring coaching techniques, moving the mentee through the process, and guiding a mentee to use the goal setting documents to concentrate on one or two goals.

Accomplished

- A mentor possesses strong skills in facilitating the process of goal selection and shows a strong understanding of the process. The mentor is strong in the following skills: using knowledge of the domains, using mentoring and coaching techniques, moving the mentee through the process, and guiding a mentee to use the goal setting documents to concentrate on one or two goals.
Mentoring Resources Used With Principals
Professional Growth System
Step 1A: Preliminary Inventory

Originally developed by the Center for Evaluation and Education Policy (CEEP) at Indiana University, August 2011. www.ceep.indiana.edu
Professional Growth System (PGS)

Step 1: Preliminary Personal Inventory

The Professional Growth System (PGS) is intended to serve as a learning tool and process for school leaders that focuses on the following four (4) primary learning targets or domains:

- Domain 1: Intrapersonal Literacy (Self-Awareness and Self-Management)
- Domain 2: Interpersonal Literacy (Understanding and Developing People)
- Domain 3: Instructional and Assessment Literacy (Managing the Teaching and Learning Program)
- Domain 4: Organizational Literacy (Redesigning the Organization)

The following pages provide general descriptions of the various stages of development for each of these four (4) primary learning targets or domains for school leaders: Emerging, Somewhat Developed, Moderately Developed and Substantially Developed. There is one page for each of the four domains, with two distinct components delineated for each domain. This preliminary personal inventory is not intended as an evaluation or definitive assessment, but rather is intended to serve as a “living document” that provides a tool for reflection and further discussion with your mentor.

Instructions: As you read each description, place an “X” or a check mark within the box that most closely matches where you currently feel you are in your development and growth as a school administrator. Please note that it is likely that for some domains no single category adequately describes your current development. In such instances simply mark the category that comes closest.

NOTE: Whenever possible, please gather information and formative feedback (formal and informal) for your scoring decisions that you can share with your mentor.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOMAIN 1: Intrapersonal Literacy (Self-Awareness and Self-Management)</th>
<th>Key Words</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Somewhat Developed</th>
<th>Moderately Developed</th>
<th>Substantially Developed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Self-awareness of leadership abilities</td>
<td>(1A) My self-awareness of my personal leadership abilities is somewhat limited, and I believe I would benefit from feedback from collegial networks to inform my self-awareness; and I believe I would benefit from increased monitoring (and self-modifying) of my feelings, thoughts and consequences of actions while leading.</td>
<td>✗</td>
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<td>• Self-monitoring</td>
<td>(1A) I have some self-awareness of my personal leadership abilities, but I do not regularly use feedback from collegial networks to inform this self-awareness; and I only occasionally (at most) consciously monitor (and self-modify) my feelings, thoughts and consequences of actions while leading.</td>
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<td>• Self-modifying</td>
<td>(1A) I have some self-awareness of my personal leadership abilities, at least in part developed through ongoing feedback from collegial networks; and although I often consciously monitor (and self-modify) my feelings, thoughts and consequences of actions while leading, I am not very consistent in this practice.</td>
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<td>• Philosophy &amp; vision of leading a school</td>
<td>(1B) My general philosophy and vision of leading a school where all children learn (statement of ideals) is still emerging; and I have not yet had substantive opportunities to be self-directing and successfully “walk the talk” (self-management) and/or the opportunities I have had have met with limited success.</td>
<td>✗</td>
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<td>• Self-management</td>
<td>(1B) I have a general philosophy and vision of leading a school where all children learn (statement of ideals), but my vision could be strengthened and/or refined; and I would benefit from additional opportunities to be self-directing and practice successfully “walking the talk” (self-management).</td>
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<td>✗</td>
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<td>• Self-directing</td>
<td>(1B) I have developed a philosophy and vision of leading a school where all children learn (statement of ideals), but have not had the sufficient opportunities to be self-directing and successfully “walk the talk” (self-management) in my current school, or a relatively similar school(s)/setting(s).</td>
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<td>• “Walking the talk”</td>
<td>(1B) I have developed a philosophy and vision of leading a school where all children learn (statement of ideals), and have successfully been able to be self-directing and “walk the talk” (self-management) in my current school, or a relatively similar school(s)/setting(s).</td>
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Step 1A: Preliminary Inventory
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<tr>
<th>School Leader Understanding and Learning Targets (Domain)</th>
<th>Key Words</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
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| **DOMAIN 2: Interpersonal Literacy**                     | **(Understand and Developing People)** | • Understanding of what motivates behaviors & promotes change  
• Mobilizing diverse individuals and groups | (2A) I believe my knowledge and understanding of what motivates behavior and shapes interactions in first and second order change need to be strengthened in order to effectively promote a positive, collaborative learning culture and mobilize a variety of individuals and groups at my current school. | (2A) I have some knowledge and understanding of what motivates behavior and shapes interactions in first and second order change, but I still need additional knowledge and understanding in order to effectively promote a positive, collaborative learning culture and mobilize a variety of individuals and groups at my current school. | (2A) I have a relatively solid understanding of what motivates behavior and shapes interactions in first and second order change, but I believe I would benefit from some additional knowledge and understanding specific to my current context/setting in order to effectively promote a positive, collaborative learning culture and mobilize a variety of individuals and groups in my current school. |
| **2B** | • Establishing norms  
• Building resourcefulness in others  
• Strengthening interpersonal skills  
• Developing situational awareness | (2B) My skills and past experience(s) establishing norms and responsibilities, building resourcefulness in others (e.g., coaching, problem resolving, consensus-building), strengthening interpersonal skills, and developing situational awareness are relatively limited and/or past efforts have not been very effective. | (2B) I have some skills and past experience(s) establishing norms and responsibilities, building resourcefulness in others (e.g., coaching, problem resolving, consensus-building), strengthening interpersonal skills, and developing situational awareness, but I have not had sufficient opportunities to implement these skills and/or my previous efforts have met with mixed results. | (2B) I have many skills and past experience(s) establishing norms and responsibilities, building resourcefulness in others (e.g., coaching, problem resolving, consensus-building), strengthening interpersonal skills, and developing situational awareness, but I believe I need some additional skills and/or practice to adapt my prior experiences to the current context/setting. | (2B) I have strong skills and past experience(s) establishing norms and responsibilities, building resourcefulness in others (e.g., coaching, problem resolving, consensus-building), strengthening interpersonal skills, and developing situational awareness; and have successfully implemented these practices in my current school, or a relatively similar school(s)/setting(s). |
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<th>School Leader Understanding and Learning Targets (Domain)</th>
<th>Key Words</th>
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<th>Moderately Developed</th>
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<td><strong>DOMAIN 3: Instructional and Assessment Literacy</strong></td>
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<td>(3A) I believe my knowledge and understanding related to effectively managing the teaching and learning program at my current school need to be strengthened in several of the following areas: effective instructional practices, standards-based teaching and learning, curriculum alignment, assessment processes, and accountability systems.</td>
<td>(3A) I have some of the knowledge and understanding needed to effectively manage the teaching and learning program at my current school, but still need additional knowledge and understanding related to one or more of the following areas: effective instructional practices, standards-based teaching and learning, curriculum alignment, assessment processes, and accountability systems.</td>
<td>(3A) I have most of the knowledge and understanding of effective instructional practices, standards-based teaching and learning, curriculum alignment, assessment processes, and accountability systems needed to manage the teaching and learning program at my current school, but need some additional knowledge and information specific to my current context/setting.</td>
<td>(3A) I have a strong knowledge and understanding of effective instructional practices, standards-based teaching and learning, curriculum alignment, assessment processes, and accountability systems needed to manage the teaching and learning program at my current school.</td>
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<td>(Managing the Teaching and Learning Program)</td>
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<td>(3B) My skills and past experience(s) using appropriate tools and strategies (e.g., observation protocols, coaching conversations, assessment data, feedback measures) to promote effective instructional practices and improve student performance are relatively limited and/or past efforts have not been very effective.</td>
<td>(3B) I have some skills and past experience(s) using appropriate tools and strategies (e.g., observation protocols, coaching conversations, assessment data, feedback measures) to promote effective instructional practices and improve student performance, but I have not had sufficient opportunities to implement these skills and/or my previous efforts have met with mixed results.</td>
<td>(3B) I have many skills and past experience(s) using appropriate tools and strategies (e.g., observation protocols, coaching conversations, assessment data, feedback measures) to promote effective instructional practices and improve student performance, but need some additional skills and/or practice to adapt my prior experiences to the current context/setting.</td>
<td>(3B) I have strong skills and past experience(s) successfully using appropriate tools and strategies (e.g., observation protocols, coaching conversations, assessment data, feedback measures) to promote effective instructional practices and improve student performance in my current school, or a relatively similar school(s)/setting(s).</td>
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|                                                          |           | (3A) I believe my knowledge and understanding of:  
• Effective instructional practices  
• Standards-based teaching and learning,  
• Curriculum alignment  
• Assessment processes  
• Accountability systems |                                                                  |                                                                  |                                                                      |                                                                      |
|                                                          |           | (3B) I have some skills and past experience(s) using appropriate tools and strategies (e.g., observation protocols, coaching conversations, assessment data, feedback measures) to promote effective instructional practices and improve student performance, but I have not had sufficient opportunities to implement these skills and/or my previous efforts have met with mixed results. |                                                                  |                                                                  |                                                                      |                                                                      |

**Step 1A: Preliminary Inventory**
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<th><strong>School Leader Understanding and Learning Targets (Domain)</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DOMAIN 4: Organizational Literacy</strong></td>
<td>• Building shared vision</td>
<td>(4A) My skills and past experience(s) building a shared vision and establishing a positive, collaborative learning culture through shared leadership are relatively limited and/or past efforts have not been very effective.</td>
<td>(4A) I have some of the skills and past experiences needed to build a shared vision and establish a positive, collaborative learning culture through shared leadership, but I have not had sufficient opportunities to implement these skills and/or my previous efforts have met with mixed results.</td>
<td>(4A) I have many skills and past experience(s) building a shared vision and establishing a positive, collaborative learning culture through shared leadership, but my experience/background was in a school/setting that differed significantly from my current school/setting.</td>
<td>(4A) I have strong skills and past experience(s) successfully building a shared vision and establishing a positive, collaborative learning culture through shared leadership in my current school, or a relatively similar school(s)/setting(s).</td>
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<td>• Establishing collaborative learning culture</td>
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<td>• Shared leadership</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Plan change &amp; set direction based on data</td>
<td>(4B) I believe my knowledge, skills and/or self-efficacy need to be strengthened in order to most effectively and efficiently plan change and set direction(s) based upon data-based evidence and research for my current school.</td>
<td>(4B) I have some of the knowledge, skills and self-efficacy needed to plan change and set direction(s) for my current school, but there are important skills I still need to learn/practice to most effectively and efficiently plan change and set direction(s) based on data.</td>
<td>(4B) I have most of the knowledge, skills and self-efficacy needed to plan change and set direction(s) based upon data-based evidence and research for my current school, but need some additional skills and/or practice to adapt my prior experiences to the current context/setting.</td>
<td>(4B) I have the strong knowledge, skills, self-efficacy and past experience(s) planning change and setting direction(s) based upon data-based evidence and research in my current school, or a relatively similar school(s)/setting(s).</td>
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Professional Growth System

Step 1B: School Context Inventory

Initially developed by the Center for Evaluation and Education Policy (CEEP) at Indiana University for the Alaska Administrator Coaching Program, August 2011. www.ceep.indiana.edu
Professional Growth System (PGS)

**Step 1B: School Context Inventory**

In Step 1A of the Professional Growth System (PGS) process you were asked to examine your current state of personal development for each of the four (4) primary domains:

- Domain 1: Intrapersonal Literacy (Self-Awareness and Self-Management)
- Domain 2: Interpersonal Literacy (Understanding and Developing People)
- Domain 3: Instructional and Assessment Literacy (Managing the Teaching and Learning Program)
- Domain 4: Organizational Literacy (Redesigning the Organization)

In determining professional growth goals, it is also important to take into account your current school context to help determine those issues and/or needs that are most critical and timely for your particular school. Therefore, Step 1B in the PGS process is to more closely examine your current school context specifically in terms of Instructional and Assessment Literacy (Domain 3) and Organizational Literacy (Domain 4). This inventory will help you (in collaboration with your coach) to more narrowly focus your professional growth plan. The data gathered through Step 1A (Preliminary Personal Inventory), when combined with the data gathered as part of Step 1B (School Context Inventory), will help you and your coach to work together to determine which specific domains to focus on for Step 2 (Detailed Inventories for Selected Domains) of this process.

**Instructions:** For each of the categories and inventory items, *first complete only Column A* by circling the number that best represents the current status of each respective issue or need from 1 (not at all, or very weak) to 5 (very strong). Next, *complete Column B for each inventory item* by placing an “X” in the column if you rated the current status or need (Column A) as 3 or lower (i.e., 1, 2, or 3). Finally, *for each of the items with an “X” in Column B, complete column C* by circling the number that best represents the current importance/timeliness of each respective issue or need from 1 (not very critical/urgent) to 5 (very critical/urgent).

**NOTE:** Whenever possible, please gather information and formative feedback (formal and informal) for your scoring decisions that you can share with your coach.
### DOMAIN 3: Instructional and Assessment Literacy

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Column A</th>
<th>Column B</th>
<th>Column C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Status of Issue or Need</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>If ( \leq 3 ) then...</td>
<td>Importance/Timeliness of Issue or Need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>If ( \leq 3 ) then...</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>Not very critical/urgent</td>
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<td></td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>Very critical/urgent</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>and complete the column to the right.</strong></td>
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#### Instructional Resources/Materials

(1) Teachers are provided with strong instructional resources and materials that are aligned with the curriculum and standards.

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#### High Quality Instructional Staff

(2) The instructional program is staffed with high quality teachers and other staff committed to student learning.

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#### Perceptions of Principal as Instructional Leader

(3) Teachers view the principal as an instructional leader.

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#### Effective Instructional Practices

(4) Teachers and instructional staff understand and implement effective instructional practices.

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</table>

#### Curricular Alignment

(5) Instructional practices and curriculum are well-aligned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Step 1B: School Context Inventory

**Domain 3: Instructional and Assessment Literacy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column A</th>
<th>Column B</th>
<th>Column C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Status of Issue or Need</strong></td>
<td><strong>Importance/Timeliness of Issue or Need</strong></td>
<td><strong>Very Strong</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Very Critical/Urgent</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Not Very Critical/Urgent</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Very Weak</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Not at all/Very Weak</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>Clear and research-based standards for instructional practice have been established.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>There are well-established and effective structures and processes in place to monitor the progress of students, teachers and the school (including monitoring teachers work in the classroom).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8)</td>
<td>Multiple measures aligned with the standards and grade level expectations are used to monitor the progress of students.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>Assessment and accountability systems include longitudinal student data.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example of If-Then Rule:**

If \( \leq 3 \) then... and complete the column to the right.
## DOMAIN 4: Organizational Literacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Column A</th>
<th>Column B</th>
<th>Column C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Status of Issue or Need</td>
<td>If ( \leq 3 ) then... ( \times ) ...and complete the column to the right.</td>
<td>Importance/Timeliness of Issue or Need</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all/Very Weak</td>
<td>Very Strong</td>
<td>Very critical/urgent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SCHOOL CULTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Column A</th>
<th>Column B</th>
<th>Column C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Learning Culture</td>
<td>(10) The school has a well-established and positive collaborative learning culture.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Collaboration</td>
<td>(11) There are established structures and opportunities that encourage teachers to collaborate.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Trust</td>
<td>(12) Teachers and community members trust the decision-making capacity of the principal.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Norms</td>
<td>(13) There are well-established, positive norms.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# DOMAIN 4: Organizational Literacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Openness to Change</th>
<th>(14) Teachers and instructional staff are open/willing to second order change if needed to improve student learning and achievement.</th>
<th>Column A</th>
<th>Column B</th>
<th>Column C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/very-strong-icon.png" alt="Very Strong" /></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/very-strong-icon.png" alt="Very Strong" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all/Very Weak</td>
<td></td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/not-very-critical-urgent-icon.png" alt="Not very critical/urgent" /></td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/very-critical-urgent-icon.png" alt="Very critical/urgent" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARENT/COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Relationships &amp; Involvement</td>
<td>(15) Positive/productive relationships have been established with families; parental involvement in student learning is supported.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Support</td>
<td>(16) The school is connected to the wider community; there is strong community support for school improvement efforts.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SCHOOL VISION/GOALS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared vision</td>
<td>(17) The school has a strong, shared vision focused on goals for student learning and achievement.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## DOMAIN 4: Organizational Literacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column A</th>
<th>Column B</th>
<th>Column C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Status of Issue or Need</td>
<td>If ( \leq 3 ) then...</td>
<td>Importance/Timeliness of Issue or Need</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| \[
\begin{align*}
\text{High expectations} & : \quad 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \\
\text{Improvement-planning focus} & : \quad 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \\
\text{School Mission} & : \quad 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \\
\text{Data-informed decision-making} & : \quad 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \\
\text{Shared Leadership} & : \quad 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 
\end{align*}
\] |

- **High expectations**
  - (18) The principal and teachers share high performance expectations for student learning and achievement.
  - 1 2 3 4 5

- **Improvement-planning focus**
  - (19) The school has a strong, well-established, research-based improvement planning process.
  - 1 2 3 4 5

- **School Mission**
  - (20) The school has a measurable, meaningful and well articulated mission statement that is familiar to and understood by all members of the school community.
  - 1 2 3 4 5

- **Data-informed decision-making**
  - (21) School-wide decisions at the principal and teacher levels are informed by data.
  - 1 2 3 4 5

- **Shared Leadership**
  - (22) The principals and teachers share leadership and work together to improve their practice and student learning.
  - 1 2 3 4 5
## DOMAIN 4: Organizational Literacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHERS</th>
<th>Column A</th>
<th>Column B</th>
<th>Column C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Prof. Development: Support</strong></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(23) Teachers feel supported and encouraged in meeting their professional development needs/goals.</td>
<td></td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Prof. Development: Alignment</strong></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(24) Teacher professional development goals are aligned with school vision/goals.</td>
<td></td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Intellectual Stimulation</strong></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(25) Teachers feel intellectually stimulated.</td>
<td></td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Intellectual Support</strong></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(26) Teachers feel intellectually supported.</td>
<td></td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Feeling Valued</strong></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(27) Teachers feel valued for their expertise.</td>
<td></td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Step 1B: School Context Inventory*
### DOMAIN 4: Organizational Literacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher commitment to standards-based teaching &amp; learning</th>
<th>Column A</th>
<th>Column B</th>
<th>Column C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(28)Teachers are committed to standards-based teaching and learning.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Column A**: Current Status of Issue or Need
  - Not at all/Very Weak
  - Very Strong

- **Column B**: Importance/Timeliness of Issue or Need
  - Not very critical/urgent
  - Very critical/urgent

If ≤ 3 then... [X]...and complete the column to the right.

If > 3 then... [ ]...and complete the column to the right.
The Impact of the Alaska Administrator Coaching Project (AACP): Executive Summary

The data from the annual participant surveys (2011-12 through 2014-15), the 2015 survey of all past and current participants (2007-2015), the in-depth case studies (2005-06 through 2009-10) and the Professional Growth System pre-post surveys (2011-2013) collectively provide consistent and compelling evidence of the AACP’s impact on both more immediate, short-term outcomes as well as longer-term outcomes. The table below highlights key findings related to each of these outcomes.

| Short-term Outcomes | Increase key leadership skills | 85% of AACP participants agreed or strongly agreed that AACP positively impacted their intrapersonal leadership skills (2 % disagreed and 13% unsure) |
|                     |                               | 78% of AACP participants agreed or strongly agreed that AACP positively impacted their interpersonal leadership skills (7 % disagreed and 15% unsure) |
|                     |                               | 72% of AACP participants agreed or strongly agreed that AACP positively impacted their instructional and assessment leadership skills (3% disagreed and 25% unsure) |
|                     |                               | 73% of AACP participants agreed or strongly agreed that AACP positively impacted their organizational development leadership skills (3% disagreed and 24% unsure) |
| Increase networks & support | 78% of AACP participants agreed or strongly agreed that AACP positively impacted their collegial relationships with other principals (7% disagreed and 15% unsure). | 62% of AACP participants specifically noted the impact and importance of networking and support from both coaches and fellow AACP principals in response to an open-ended question, “In what ways (if any) did your participation in the ACCP impact you?” |
| Intermediate Outcomes | Increase key practices critical to school success | 95% of AACP participants agreed or strongly agreed that their participation in the AACP positively impacted each of the five key areas identified by the Wallace Foundation (i.e., shaping a school-wide vision, creating a climate hospitable to education, cultivating leadership in others, improving instruction, and managing people, data and processes) |
| Increase teacher performance | 93% of AACP participants agreed or strongly agreed that their participation in the AACP positively impacted teacher performance |
| Long-term Outcomes | Increase student performance | 91% of AACP participants agreed or strongly agreed that their participation in the AACP positively impact student performance (e.g., student attendance, student graduation rates, student engagement, academic achievement) |
| Increase principal retention | 85% of AACP participants agreed or strongly agreed that their participation in AACP positively impacted their retention at the school where they were working during AACP participation and their overall retention in the field |

The data noted in the table are supported by additional quantitative and qualitative evidence described in the full report. Collectively, these data illustrate the overall effectiveness of the AACP leadership development and mentoring program for early career principals. These data allow policy and program decision makers to go beyond a simple consideration of the innumerable powerful commendations and
testimonials that are available from past AACP participants to an examination of the comprehensive analyses of what is known about the impact and effectiveness of the AACP.

Other Key Findings

- **Without the AACP or a similar program, many early career principals are likely to feel unprepared for their role as a principal.** The need for a leadership development and mentoring program such as the AACP is highlighted by the fact that 40% of all past and current AACP participants did not feel adequately prepared to implement key practices critical to success as a principal prior to their participation in the AACP (Wallace Foundation, 2013).

- **AACP participants attribute the largest percentage of their leadership skills to their participation in the leadership development and mentoring program.** Early career principals attribute 40% of intrapersonal skills, 40% of interpersonal skills, 51% of instructional and assessment skills and 42% of organizational development skills directly to their participation in the AACP. In contrast, less than 15% of all AACP participants attributed intrapersonal, interpersonal, instructional/assessment or organizational development skills to their participation in a university preparation program.

- **AACP is consistently lauded by participating principals for its critical role in helping early career principals achieve success.** Examples of comments include:

  AACP is an exceptional program and is the single greatest contributor to my professional growth as a principal!

  The AACP was probably the most powerful training I've ever been privileged to experience in my life. This training should be required for anyone that is involved in the administration of public schools.

  There is no other position that has greater influence on a school than the principal and there is no other training that has influenced me more than AACP.

  THE best, most relevant & most timely professional development I have EVER participated in was the AACP.

- **Past AACP participants strongly believe in the need to continue funding for the program.** Examples of comments (even though the survey did not specifically solicit feedback related to program funding) include:

  The funding necessary to support this program is well worth the investment to the State of Alaska! Several of my colleagues from the coaching project have moved "up" or continue to be award winning principals, which in turn means award winning students and schools! This is an amazing program! It would be a travesty to cut something so valuable.

  An awesome program that needs to be funded by the state of Alaska.

  Although I realize funding is being cut statewide in education as well as other areas, this program has had the most positive effect on increasing my knowledge base, providing me with resources as well as networking with other principals. Cutting this program would have a very negative affect on individuals as well as schools and of course students.
Mentoring Resources
Used With
Superintendents
The Center for Evaluation and Education Policy (CEEP) at Indiana University developed the Superintendent Planning Rubric. CEEP did an extensive literature review and developed a document entitled *Successful Superintendency* that identified the five leadership domains for the Superintendent Planning Rubric.

The Superintendent Planning Rubric is a planning and goal setting tool to be used by a mentor with a mentee. It is not to be used as an evaluation and it is confidential. It is highly recommended that a limited number of topics are selected from the rubric to focus mentoring conversations. The rubric is NOT to be sent or given to a superintendent to complete in its entirety. The mentor should gather enough information through initial conversations to determine which of the five leadership domain to explore for a goal with the mentee.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive Leadership Domain Component</th>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Accomplished</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop collaborative vision for district (Articulated Vision)</td>
<td>I have formulated a strategic vision for district improvement, but have not yet received input from relevant district stakeholders.</td>
<td>I have created a strategic vision for district improvement and gathered input from relevant district stakeholders.</td>
<td>I have completed the strategic vision for district improvement, but have not yet articulated through a mission statement.</td>
<td>I have articulated a strategic vision for district improvement through a mission statement which incorporates input from relevant district stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate policy formulation (Formulating Policy)</td>
<td>I have gathered policy related information relevant to stakeholders.</td>
<td>I have provided policy related information to relevant stakeholders.</td>
<td>I have provided policy related information to relevant stakeholders, and started to gather relevant input from stakeholders.</td>
<td>I have provided information to relevant stakeholders and gathered relevant input from relevant stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have reached out to building level administrators, school board members, and teachers in an effort to build collaboration in decision-making process.</td>
<td>I have facilitated discussion and collaboration amongst stakeholders.</td>
<td>I have gained cooperation among building-level administrators, school board members and teachers.</td>
<td>I regularly encourage a collaborative decision-making processes and the de-bureaucratization or flattening of the educational leadership hierarchy (including building-level administrators, school board members, and teachers).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive Leadership Domain Component</th>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Accomplished</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set clear and non-negotiable goals (Goal-Setting)</td>
<td>I am currently learning and interested in identifying ways to improve classroom instruction and student achievement.</td>
<td>I have identified ways to improve classroom instruction and student achievement, working with building-level administrators to establish priorities and establish measurable targets.</td>
<td>I am working with principals to set clear non-negotiable goals for learning and instruction, providing leadership teams with responsibility and authority to determine goals.</td>
<td>I have identified district needs for improved classroom instruction and student achievement; established clear priorities; and formulated mutually agreed upon and non-negotiable goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor school and district progress (Monitoring Progress)</td>
<td>I have created a district-wide committee (or team of stakeholders) to create an improvement plan.</td>
<td>I have worked with relevant stakeholders/committee members to determine the specific target areas (school district, individual schools, student sub-groups).</td>
<td>I have created a five year plan for improvement, but have not yet shared the plan with relevant publics.</td>
<td>I have created a five year plan for improvement that includes specific targets (for school district, individual schools, and for student sub-groups within schools) to be achieved, and shared plan with relevant publics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have established/compiled a monitoring and evaluation plan for policies, programs and practices.</td>
<td>I have completed a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan to assess the progress of policies, programs and practices in the district.</td>
<td>I periodically carry out monitoring and evaluation of policies, programs and practices to ensure progress towards achievement of district goals.</td>
<td>I carry out frequent and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of policies, programs and practices to ensure progress towards achievement of district goals; and I share district progress reports with relevant publics.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I intermittently analyze how adequately schools are meeting set goals.</td>
<td>I regularly identify delays or discrepancies in school progress.</td>
<td>I have determined corrective measures for those schools that do not achieve progress.</td>
<td>I regularly identify delays or discrepancies in school progress and introduce corrective measures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Leadership Domain Component</td>
<td>Beginning</td>
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<td>Accomplished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage district finances, create budgets and allocate resources according to established district priorities (Resource Allocation)</td>
<td>I have reviewed district finances and allocations.</td>
<td>I have determined the practicality of allocations, both time and money.</td>
<td>I am making changes in resource allocation to meet program needs and to accomplish district's goals.</td>
<td>I have ensured that the necessary resources, including time and money, are allocated to meet program needs and accomplish district's goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have determined the programs and professional development directly related to improving school achievement targets.</td>
<td>I have consulted with appropriate finance personnel to determine proper procedures to reallocate resources.</td>
<td>I am meeting with appropriate stakeholders to disseminate budgetary information/changes.</td>
<td>I have reallocated resources from programs that have not been identified as priorities to programs and professional development that are directly related to improving school achievement targets, when necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 46
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative Leadership Domain Component</th>
<th>Beginning</th>
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<th>Accomplished</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active participation in staff selection (Staff Selection)</td>
<td>I am reviewing the selection criteria currently in place at my district.</td>
<td>I have conferred with school administrators to evaluate the selection criteria and procedures for the selection of staff.</td>
<td>I have established the selection criteria and procedures for the selection of staff.</td>
<td>I have established the selection criteria and procedures for the selection of staff and I am directly involved in the recruitment and selection of professional staff; I am often involved in the selection of new teachers and nearly always involved in the selection of new administrators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am attending meetings related to staff searches to gain an understanding of the power structure in the district.</td>
<td>I have articulated my goal to be involved in the process of staff selection in the district.</td>
<td>I am resolving the balance between being involved in the process of staff selection while not dominating control over the process.</td>
<td>I have maintained balance between district control and local autonomy in the selection of new staff.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am examining current job vacancies (or recently hired) and submitted applications to gain an understanding of the “talent.”</td>
<td>I have consulted with principals in the district regarding past hires to assess the level of outside influences or pressure on staff selection.</td>
<td>I have articulated my goal to ensure that hiring selections are consistent with the district’s established criteria.</td>
<td>I have buffered (safeguard/shield) schools and principals (from undue pressure) from making selections inconsistent with the district’s established criteria.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervise and evaluate building-level administrators and staff (Supervision and Evaluation)</td>
<td>I am currently assessing the evaluation procedures across schools and districts.</td>
<td>I am in the process of merging teacher organization goals (or teacher certification) with the districts’ strategic vision (school objectives) to construct teacher evaluation procedures.</td>
<td>I have consulted with principals for input regarding teacher evaluation procedures.</td>
<td>I have standardized teacher evaluation procedures across schools and districts; and I have established teacher evaluation objectives closely correlated with school objectives. I also take personal responsibility for principal supervision and evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have informed district principals of my philosophy with regard to supervision and evaluation.</td>
<td>I have scheduled regular meetings with principals to discuss principal responsibilities and evaluation procedures.</td>
<td>I have met regularly with principals to review the site-level observation/evaluation visit.</td>
<td>I have established regular meetings with principals to discuss important needs and to focus on improving instructional programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have determined the logistics of and arranged for school visits throughout the district.</td>
<td>I have determined how to review (using protocol, interviews, etc) the extent to which district and school goals and strategies are being implemented.</td>
<td>I have determined how to measure the effectiveness of school goals and strategies.</td>
<td>I have arranged frequent school visits in order to review the extent to which district and school goals and strategies are being implemented and the effectiveness of these strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage a climate of shared power by recognizing and not restricting the “defined autonomy” of principals (Defined Autonomy)</td>
<td>I have consulted with leadership teams to determine the optimal way to meet goals for learning and instruction.</td>
<td>I have determined the extent to which authority will be delegated to school leadership team.</td>
<td>I have set clear, non-negotiable goals for learning and instruction.</td>
<td>I have set clear, non-negotiable goals for learning and instruction while delegating authority and responsibility to school leadership teams for determining how to meet those goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have reviewed the district/school improvement plans.</td>
<td>I have publicly (meeting/email) disseminated my philosophy/view on the importance of principals and teachers taking ownership in determining how to meet district/school goals.</td>
<td>I have consulted with each schools leadership team regarding their school improvement plan and implementation of new policies and programs.</td>
<td>I regularly encourage ownership of district/school improvement plans by principals and teachers who directly implement new policies and programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have reviewed the district/school statewide test scores.</td>
<td>I have reviewed school curriculum and professional development.</td>
<td>I have met with schools to discuss current status on student achievement across the district.</td>
<td>I have built relationships with schools to encourage progress and success in improving student achievement and classroom instruction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Leadership Domain Component</td>
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<tr>
<td>Articulate a conception of power that is facilitative (Conceptions of Power)</td>
<td>I have formulated or know how power operates and my approach to exercising power.</td>
<td>I plan to promote facilitative or distributive leadership ideas throughout my district.</td>
<td>I have actively promoted leadership based on sharing power with boards and school administrators.</td>
<td>I understand the power exercised by the superintendent as a power to be shared with school boards and school administration in order to promote distributed leadership and collaborative power.</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Leadership Domain Component</td>
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<tr>
<td>Build strong partnership with school boards (Superintendent-School Board Relations)</td>
<td>I am keenly aware of the power struggles that can ensue between the superintendent and board members.</td>
<td>I have developed a plan to recognize and resist pressure groups or the individual interests of board members.</td>
<td>I objectively present information and outline possible gains and consequences of proposed actions to school board members.</td>
<td>I have developed functioning coalitions with schools, school boards, and local and state education agencies; and I have scheduled meetings with school board members in order to strengthen effective communication.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I have compiled information related to the dynamic of school board relationships and communication skills.</td>
<td>I have approached school board members about a workshop/training in how to effectively communicate with school board members.</td>
<td>I have commissioned a group or team to develop a school board training.</td>
<td>I have provided school board training in areas such as how to communicate effectively with school board members and the dynamics of interactions between school boards and superintendents.</td>
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<td>Political Leadership</td>
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<td>Accomplished</td>
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**Display political awareness and interpersonal skills (Political Astuteness)**

- **Beginning**: I have gauged the political climate in the local community/district.
- **Emerging**: I have considered and listened to the diverse views of citizens in the community.
- **Developing**: I am aware of the particular interests that school board members may bring to the table.
- **Accomplished**: I am politically astute and understand the political climate of the local community; as well as the particular interests of board members. I listen to the diverse voices and views of citizens, and I effectively communicate and report school district data.

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<tr>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Leadership Domain Component</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as ethical leader/role model for district (Role Modeling)</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructional Leadership Domain Component</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Display active and meaningful support for staff development (Staff Development)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have reviewed staff professional development to see how closely it parallels the district focus in curriculum and instruction.</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>Instructional Leadership Domain Component</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboratively define framework for research based instructional practices to be incorporated in classroom (Defining an Instructional Framework)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have formed instructional teams (or leadership teams) to develop a preferred method of teaching.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructional Leadership Domain Component</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reinforce district goals and priorities (Reinforcing Priorities)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Development Domain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participate in leadership seminars and coaching programs (Workshops, Coaching and Mentoring)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I rarely (or never) have opportunities to discuss what I have learned from leadership seminars and coaching programs with peers; and only occasionally have many opportunities for reflective practice.</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Successful Superintendency

DOMAINS/KEY COMPONENTS

Jonathan Plucker, Ph.D.
Marcey Moss, Ph.D.
Michael Holstead
Mona Syed

August 28, 2009

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In order to identify key components and domains of successful superintendents, a comprehensive review of relevant literature was conducted. An annotated bibliography of key articles and books related to leadership qualities in school superintendents of effective schools, as well as some articles related to characteristics of principals which may be generalized for district level personnel, is included in Appendix A. These key articles and books, along with other literature and research, was synthesized and analyzed to identify key domains and components found in successful/effective leadership. In addition, based on the literature a discussion is provided of what each component “looks like,” in a realistic setting.

The one commonality found in all literature, which reflects on the characteristics of effective superintendents, is that there has not been enough scientifically-based studies conducted that link superintendent characteristics with student achievement. Of all of the studies and surveys reviewed, only one study, the meta-analysis by Waters and Marzano (2007), attempted to empirically correlate student achievement with superintendent characteristics. The lack of empirical research must be taken as a caveat when reviewing the qualities and characteristics presented below of effective superintendents.

The key components and characteristics of successful superintendents as identified in the literature include the following: (1) executive leadership (i.e., articulated vision, formulating policy, goal-setting, monitoring progress), (2) administrative leadership (i.e., resource Allocation, staff selection, supervision and evaluation, defined autonomy, (3) political leadership (i.e., conceptions of power, superintendent-school board relations, political astuteness and role modeling), (4) instructional leadership (i.e., staff development, defining an instructional framework, reinforcing priorities), and (5) professional development (i.e., workshops, coaching and mentoring). Each of these commonalities found in the literature related to effective leadership in the superintendent role are presented below in Table 1. This is followed by a discussion of what each component “looks like” in a realistic setting.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Domains</th>
<th>Functions</th>
<th>Key Characteristics</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Leadership</td>
<td>1. Develop collaborative vision for district</td>
<td>1a. Articulate a strategic vision for district improvement through a mission statement which incorporates input from relevant district stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                          | 2. Facilitate policy formulation               | 2a. Provide sufficient information to and gather relevant input from relevant stakeholders.  
2b. Encourage collaborative decision-making processes and the de-bureaucratization or flattening of the educational leadership hierarchy.                                                                                     |
|                          | 3. Set clear and non-negotiable goals          | 3a. Work alongside building-level administrators to identify district needs for improved classroom instruction and student achievement; establish clear priorities; and formulate mutually agreed upon and non-negotiable goals.  
3b. Create five year plan for improvement that includes specific targets to be achieved, and share plan with relevant publics.                                                                                   |
|                          | 4. Monitor school and district progress        | 4a. Carry out frequent and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of policies, programs and practices to ensure progress towards achievement of district goals.  
4b. Identify delays or discrepancies in school progress and introduce corrective measures  
4c. Share district progress reports with relevant publics.                                                                                                                                                     |
| Administrative Leadership| 1. Manage district finances, create budgets and allocate resources according to established district priorities | 1a. Ensure that the necessary resources, including time and money, are allocated to meet program needs and accomplish district’s goals.  
1b. Reallocate resources from programs that have not been identified as priorities to programs and professional development that are directly related to improving school achievement targets, when necessary. |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Leadership Domains</th>
<th>Functions</th>
<th>Key Characteristics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Active participation in staff selection</td>
<td>2a. Establish selection criteria and procedures for the selection of staff.</td>
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<td>2b. Maintain balance between district control and local autonomy in the selection of new staff.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2c. Buffer schools and principals from making selections inconsistent with the district’s established criteria.</td>
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<td>2d. Be directly involved in the recruitment and selection of professional staff.</td>
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<td>3. Supervise and evaluate building-level administrators and staff</td>
<td>3a. Standardize teacher evaluation procedures across schools and districts.</td>
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<td>3b. Establish teacher evaluation objectives closely correlated with school objectives.</td>
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<td>3c. Take personal responsibility for principal supervision and evaluation.</td>
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<td>3d. Establish regular meetings with principals to discuss important needs and focus on improving instructional programs.</td>
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<td>3e. Arrange frequent school visits in order to review the extent to which district and school goals and strategies are being implemented and how effective these strategies are.</td>
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<td>4. Encourage a climate of shared power by recognizing and not restricting the ‘defined autonomy’ of principals</td>
<td>4a. Set clear, non-negotiable goals for learning and instruction while delegating authority and responsibility to school leadership teams for determining how to meet those goals.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4b. Encourage ownership of district/school improvement plans by principals and teachers who directly implement new policies and programs.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4c. Build relationships with schools to encourage progress and success in improving student achievement and classroom instruction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Leadership</td>
<td>1. Articulate a conception of power that is facilitative</td>
<td>1a. Understand the power exercised by the superintendent as a power to be shared with school boards and school administration in order to promote distributed leadership and collaborative power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Domains</td>
<td>Functions</td>
<td>Key Characteristics</td>
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| 2. Build strong partnership with school boards | 2a. Develop functioning coalitions with schools, school boards, and local and state education agencies.  
2b. Schedule one-on-one meetings with school board members in order to strengthen effective communication. |
| 3. Display political awareness and interpersonal skills | 3a. Be politically astute and understand the political climate of the local community; as well as the particular interests of board members.  
3b. Listen to the diverse voices and views of citizens.  
3c. Negotiate and mediate superintendent-school board relationships in order to “transform politics into education.”  
3d. Effectively communicate and report school district data. |
| 4. Serve as moral leader/role model for district | 4a. Be visible in the community and display a high degree of professionalism, develop trust, and communicate honestly in order to serve as a role model for district community and to garner political support and influence for initiating reform.  
4b. “Affirm the purpose of school” and be cognizant of the need to uphold social justice in decision-making processes and leadership. |
| Instructional Leadership | 1. Display active and meaningful support for staff development | 1a. Allocate adequate funding for teacher and principal professional development.  
1b. Ensure staff professional development closely parallels district focus in curriculum and instruction; and allows the acquisition of necessary skills and competencies needed to achieve established goals.  
1c. Share research-based data and research with principals and staff. |
| | 2. Collaboratively define framework for research-based instructional practices to be incorporated in classroom | 2a. Establish an instructional and curricular focus appropriate for district schools, while refraining from imposing a single instructional model.  
2b. Establish preferred methods of teaching. |
## Executive Leadership

### Articulated Vision

As Chief Executive Officers, superintendents are called upon to juggle a variety of tasks, the most central of which is developing a clearly articulated and strategic vision for district improvement. In order to be effective, superintendents must articulate a vision that: keenly understands the context within which schools are situated; identifies the most pressing needs and priorities of the communities they aim to serve; and proposes realistic, necessary and attainable reforms. In the current educational climate, superintendents are increasingly expected to initiate positive change and growth within their districts, focusing particularly on school quality improvement and student achievement (Waters and Marzano, 2006). In the process of developing a vision for the district, superintendents are called upon to assess the concerns and interests of a variety of district stakeholders (i.e. school administrators, school boards,

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Leadership Domains</th>
<th>Functions</th>
<th>Key Characteristics</th>
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<tr>
<td>2c. Exercise influence over the curriculum used in schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Reinforce district goals and priorities</td>
<td>3a. Implement important socialization patterns which reinforce consistency in integral school operations.</td>
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<td>3b. Sustain high degree of internal consistency in district in curriculum and instruction.</td>
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<td>3c. Spend time in schools interacting with principals, teachers, and students on everyday activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>1. Participate in leadership seminars and coaching programs</td>
<td>1a. Acquire new skills, competencies and knowledge base to address routine and non-routine problems.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1b. Develop peer support networks</td>
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<td>1c. Build relationships of trust with senior or novice superintendents</td>
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<td>1d. Engage in reflective practices</td>
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<td>1e. Develop problem-solving strategies and give/receive input on action plans</td>
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teachers, students, parents etc). Taking diverse input into account, superintendents must develop a vision that is innovative, and can be translated into mission statements, district goals and measurable objectives (Holdaway and Genge, 1995).

**Formulating Policy**

Scholarship on educational leadership continues to emphasize the need for facilitative leadership and collaboration in decision-making processes (Mountford, 2004; Pounder 1998; Chase, 1995, Noddings, 1992). Including building-level administrators, school board members, and teachers in policy formulation allows superintendents to “flatten” or “debureaucratize” the educational hierarchy which establishes a new environment for power-sharing, and allows the development of greater consensus and ownership of policy initiatives amongst key agents that will be charged with implementing the policies (Mountford, 2004; Glass, 2000; Leithwood, 1995). Facilitating discussion and collaboration amongst stakeholders allows for mutual, but not necessarily unanimous agreement regarding policy and programming. However, collaborative decision-making does “imply that once stakeholders reach an acceptable level of agreement regarding district goals, all stakeholders agree to support the attainment of those goals” (Waters and Marzano, 2006: 11). Cooperation amongst different agents within the educational hierarchy encourages greater fidelity in implementation.

**Goal-setting**

In discussing the positive correlation between superintendent leadership practices and student achievement, Waters and Marzano emphasize the need to set clear and non-negotiable goals for district schools. Once again, goals should be set in a collaborative manner, and should be translated into specific targets for the school district, for individual schools and for student sub-groups within schools (2006: 12). Establishing measurable targets, emphasizing the non-negotiable nature of goals, and ensuring that building-level administrators and teachers are aware of set goals allows the district as a whole to remain committed to reform.

**Monitoring Progress**

Regular monitoring and evaluation is critical in policy implementation, and it falls to the superintendent to analyze how adequately schools in their districts are meeting set targets. Sharing reports with individual schools allows them to know the strides they have made in meeting their goals, as well as,
where school efforts are falling short. Highlighting positive gains sustains momentum amongst building-level administrators and teachers; and identifying shortfalls provides a valuable feedback mechanism for introducing corrective measures for existing programs and practices (Waters and Marzano, 2006).

**Administrative Leadership**

**Resource Allocation**

Effective superintendents must ensure that the necessary resources, including time and money, are allocated to meet program needs and accomplish district’s goals (Waters and Marzano, 2007). Those programs which have been implemented to accomplish the goals for achievement and instruction need to receive adequate budget allocation (Bjork, 1993). Furthermore, all staff needs to be provided with relevant and adequate information regarding programs, strategies, goals, and objectives (Holdaway and Genge, 1995).

**Staff Selection**

Superintendents need to be involved in the selection of district and building level faculty and staff. Murphy and Hallinger (1986) found in their analysis of superintendents of effective school districts that superintendents were often involved in the selection of new teachers and nearly always involved in the selection of new administrators. Superintendents need to be a key factor in the establishment of selection criteria and procedures for the selection of staff. It is also the role of superintendents to buffer schools and principals from making selections which are inconsistent with the district’s established criteria. Studies have also shown that direct involvement in the recruitment and selection of professional staff, if the size of the district makes this feasible, has an effect on the quality of the district’s instructional program (Bjork, 1993; Murphy and Hallinger, 1986). However, a balance must be maintained between district control and local autonomy in the selection of new staff. Statistics from one study conducted by Zigarelli (1996) reveal that the more autonomy a principal has in personnel decisions, the greater students’ school performance will be. Therefore, a superintendent should be involved in the process of staff selection, but should not dominate control over the process.

**Supervision and Evaluation**

Supervision and evaluation of principals and staff are two key roles of a superintendent. That means that superintendents need to be present at schools to supervise and monitor staff and evaluate the extent to
which the strategies of the district and school are being implemented, and the effectiveness of the
strategies in achieving district goals and objectives. According to Murphy, Hallinger, and Peterson
(1985) superintendents of effective school districts were personally responsible for the supervision and
evaluation of school building principals. Effective superintendents also set up regular meetings with
principals to discuss the important needs of the schools, to review the site-level observation from the
superintendents’ visits, and to focus on improving instructional programs. Superintendents should also
standardize teacher evaluation procedures across school districts, and ensure that teacher evaluation
objectives closely correlate with school objectives.

**Defined Autonomy**

Research has shown that superintendents need to strike a balance between district and building-level
control in a number of school-related matters. According to Waters and Marzano (2007) effective
superintendents provide principals with “defined autonomy,” that is, setting clear, non-negotiable goals
for learning and instruction, while providing school leadership teams with the responsibility and
authority for determining how to meet those goals. In a survey of superintendents of effective school
districts conducted by Holdaway and Genge (1995), all of the superintendents surveyed reported that
being an effective delegator is means for superintendents to provide educational leadership.

**Political Leadership**

**Conceptions of Power**

Being an effective leader involves an in-depth understanding of how power operates and a specific
approach to exercising power. As has been previously mentioned, educational leadership programs are
increasingly promoting facilitative or distributive leadership based upon the idea that superintendents
should share power with boards and school administrators; rather than wield power over these agents
(Mountford, 2004; Leithwood, 1995). Sharing power allows the development of partnerships and
strengthens the commitment to reform within the school district.

**Superintendent-School Board Relations**

Literature on superintendent and school board relationships continue to emphasize the power struggles
that ensue between the superintendent and “pressure groups” within the board (Mountford, 2004).
Superintendents need to be savvy in knowing how to recognize and resist pressure groups or the individual interests of board members, especially when these interests work towards the detriment of district progress. According to Glass superintendents are called upon to be “professional advisors” (2000: 25) to board members and objectively present information and outline possible gains and consequences of proposed actions. Not only do strained superintendent-board relationships create added stress for the superintendent, but it can also weaken commitment and support for district policies. Thus, superintendents must actively work to develop “functioning coalitions” with school boards, as well as local and state education agencies, through good interpersonal and communication skills. In fact Glass (2000) states that superintendents have much to gain in the way of support and better working relationships, by scheduling one-on-one meetings with board members.

**Political Astuteness and Role Modeling**

Included in the ISLLC standards is the need for superintendents to cultivate an “understanding [of] the socioeconomic, legal, political and cultural contexts of schools” (Bjork, 2001), because schools are political institutions and play a significant role in the political arena (Glass 2000). Superintendents must be politically astute and need to gauge the political climate in their local communities and learn how to negotiate this environment. As effective leaders superintendents must uphold social justice and democratic values and need to “ensure that the voices of all citizens are valued” (Bjork, 2001: xi). In addition, they must be publicly visible as moral leaders and role models of professionalism to build political support and be able to influence policymaking at the local and state level (Glass, 2000). According to Leithwood, “superintendents have a lot of experience with politics. Politics seems a natural part of the job as it is usually defined. Among the most frequent contacts superintendents have on the job are interactions with their political masters. So, starting with the politics of the job and trying to fashion education from it is more like using the rudder of a boat to steer the best course” (1995: 6).

**Instructional Leadership**

**Staff Development**

According to Murphy and Hallinger (1986) superintendents of effective school districts were active in the selection of staff development programs for their district. These professional development programs need to closely parallel the district’s focus in curriculum and instruction. In the survey of
superintendents conducted by Holdaway and Genge (1995), superintendents reported that being an example to your staff was a primary means of being an effective leader. Superintendents who are focused on non-negotiable goals related to student achievement and classroom instruction will serve as a model to faculty and staff.

**Defining an Instructional Framework**

An articulated framework of curricular and instructional focus is essential in maintaining effective schools and districts. It is the role of the superintendent to ensure that such an instructional and curricular focus is both established and monitored. The superintendent must work with staff to develop a preferred approach to instruction and system wide curricular expectations (Murphy and Hallinger, 1986). In their study, Murphy and Hallinger reported that many of the superintendents established preferred methods of teaching or a preferred instructional philosophy. Furthermore, the superintendents reported having influence in the curriculum used at the schools in their district. For example, the superintendents in districts that used standardized tests reported that the schools were required to use the district selected instrument (Murphy and Hallinger, 1986).

**Reinforcing Priorities**

Curricular and instructional goals, once established, must be continually reinforced in order that they remain the focus of the school and district throughout the year. A primary means of reinforcing priorities is through consistency of operations in the school system. Superintendents need to be key actors in sustaining a high degree of internal consistency throughout the district in curriculum and instruction (Murphy and Hallinger, 1986). In order to do this, Murphy and Hallinger suggest the implementation of important socialization patterns which reinforce consistency in integral school operations. Another way for superintendents to reinforce the priorities established by schools and districts is through being present and visible at schools. This means spending time in schools interacting with principals, teacher, and students on everyday activities (Holdaway and Genge, 1995). School visits by superintendents should be used to review curriculum and instruction, as well as facilities; to build school culture through communication, team building, and problem resolution; and to act as a role model and supervisor. In a 1994 study, Zigarelli reported that better relations and tighter coupling between administration and the classroom culminates in more productive teachers and greater student achievement. Although a follow up study conducted in 1999 failed to scientifically link the two factors,
the presence of superintendents at schools does serve as a reminder of the priorities and goals established as a focus by the district.

Professional Development

Workshops, Coaching and Mentoring
Both novice superintendents as well as experienced superintendents have much to gain from in-service professional development, since workshops, seminars, and coaching and mentoring programs allow for the acquisition of new skills, competencies and a knowledge base for applying problem-solving strategies for routine and non-routine problems (Bjork, 2001). Both workshops and coaching programs offer the opportunity for superintendents from different districts to dialogue with each other and to engage in reflective practices. Superintendents need to acquire skills and capacities that enable them to foster team-building, professional development and collaborative relationships as “attention to the building and maintenance of caring relationships through the organization will be transformed into student academic and social growth” (Grogan, 2002: 243). Such professional development activities also allow superintendents to build a supportive network of peers, whereby mentors are able to provide feedback on proposed action plans and help novice superintendents strategize about how to solve problems within their districts. In addition, these programs become sites whereby superintendents are intellectually stimulated and are able to develop and discuss innovative programs and action plans. Engaging in reflective practices allow for professional growth for both novice as well as senior superintendents.

Although not a specific leadership domain, it is also important to briefly discuss superintendent tenure in a discussion. Many scholars continue to reiterate the crisis in the superintendency, which is characterized by an increasing rate of superintendent turnover; a decrease in the number of candidate applying for the superintendency and a lack of well qualified applicants (Grogan, 2002). While superintendent tenure is not a clear leadership domain it still must be mentioned that researchers have found correlations between tenure and student achievement. Waters and Marzano (2006) found that superintendent tenure in a district is positively correlated (.19) to student achievement and state “this finding implies that the longevity of the superintendent has a positive effect on the average academic
achievement of students in the district. These positive effects appear to manifest themselves as early as two years into a superintendent’s tenure” (2006: 14).

Works Cited (Literature Review)


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Appendix A: Annotated Bibliography


Bjork’s article, “Effective Schools-Effective Superintendents: The Emerging Instructional Leadership Role,” analyzes the scholarship of the emerging role that superintendents play in instructional leadership. Bjork states that superintendents enact their instructional leadership roles through a broad array of activities, including staff selection, principal supervision, establishing clear instructional goals, monitoring instruction, and financial planning for instruction to improve instruction.


In his book, *8 Keys to an Extraordinary Board-Superintendent Partnership*, Doug Eadie emphasizes the importance of a strong working relationship between the school board and the superintendent; he argues that the top priority of the superintendent is to maintain a close, positive, productive and enduring relationship with the board. His eight keys to doing so are: 1) *Put partnership at the top of your list*: building and maintaining a partnership with the school board should be a high priority for superintendents; 2) *Specialize in the governing “business”:* superintendents need to be an expert in every facet of governing in order to cultivate a solid partnership with the board; 3) *Empower your board*: superintendents need to actively involve the board in “high-impact governing” that makes a visible difference in the affairs of the district; 4) *Turn board members into owners*: superintendents need to meaningfully involve the board in generating the governing products of the district in order that the board takes ownership for their work; 5) *Spice up the governing stew*: superintendents should attempt to make the work of governing more inspiring and interesting for board member in order to counteract the effects of the demanding work of governing; 6) *Get your senior administrator on board*: a strong partnership with the board requires that senior administrators of the district are committed to the governing principles of the superintendent and are knowledgeable and actively involved in working as a team on board-related matters; 7) *Keep expectations in sync*: there must be clearly defined performance expectations for superintendents, as well as regular assessments of the superintendent’s performance against these expectations; and 8) *Stay on the high-growth path*: a close and productive board-superintendent partnership depends on the superintendent’s growth and change in response to advances and changes in personnel and governance.

In their article “The State of the American School Superintendency”, Glass and Franceschini presented the results of a survey of 1,338 superintendents across the country. According to the authors, the superintendency is an increasingly “people” type of position with superintendents saying that lack of interpersonal communication skills among district staff is the factor most limiting their effectiveness. At the same time, they say that presence of interpersonal communication is the most important factor helping their effectiveness. Thus, interpersonal relations is the key factor both facilitating and restricting superintendents’ effectiveness. Factors that contribute to superintendent effectiveness include: Interpersonal skills (37% of respondents), Board of education (16%), Central office team (15%), School principals (13%), Personal support system (7%). Factors that inhibit superintendent effectiveness include: inadequate financing of schools (29%), Too many insignificant demands (19%), State and federal mandates (16%), Board of education (13%), Teachers union (6%), Collective bargaining agreements (6%). As an additional note, the authors emphasized the importance of the working relationships between boards and their superintendents; if the relationship is harmonious, more energy is usually focused on building programs rather than defending present programs and practices.

A total 39% of the superintendents said that they had received no mentoring before becoming a superintendent; 33% indicated the superintendent in their previous district had provided some mentoring perhaps helping to smooth the way in their first position; and 22% said another superintendent had provided mentoring assistance. On the other hand, the authors did note that formal professional development activities for superintendents generally are available through professional associations and the state department of education. Superintendents were also asked to indicate which areas of professional development they believed might make them more effective. The two most often selected topics were strategic planning (39%) and systemic thinking (45%). Supers also chose instruction, assessment, and data management (33%) and public relations and communications (33%) as needed professional development areas.

Superintendents strongly believe that the 8 domains listed should be part of a superintendent evaluation: Lead and manage personnel effectively; manage fiscal activities effectively; manage administrative and facilities functions effectively; foster effective school-community relations; relate effectively with school board; foster a positive district/school climate; stimulate, focus, and support improvement of classroom instruction; respect diversity and promote equality of opportunity.


In her book, Learning from the Best, Sandra Harris presents the opinions of 22 current and former superintendents on what it takes to be a successful and effective superintendent. In her introduction Harris provides general skills and qualities all superintendents need to have in order to be successful. She writes that qualified superintendents manage an entrenched bureaucracy; develop a multi-million dollar budget; know how to deal with a demanding community and aggressive press; has a mission,
leadership skills, political smarts, and management prowess; is an inspiring leader; will improve teacher quality; is committed to the advancement of children; and has superior insight, courage, and great work ethic. A superintendent must understand instruction, know how to use data, be able to interpret accountability measures, provide resources, be visible, empower risk takers, encourage collaboration, lead diverse groups of stakeholders, be devoted to students, have strong interpersonal skills, build community relationships and work with the school board.


In “How Effective Superintendents Understand their own Work,” Holdaway and Genge present their findings from a survey study conducted of the thirteen most effective superintendents in Alberta, Canada. These superintendents were chosen as such by a panel of fourteen judges, each of whom had their own criteria of effectiveness. In the survey, responding superintendents were first asked to identify their highest priorities, and planning emerged as the most commonly identified priority area, followed by providing appropriate programs. In regards to questions regarding how superintendents provided educational leadership, all superintendents mentioned being action-oriented and being an effective delegator; other answers included being an example (6 responses), involving all stakeholders (5), and providing people with adequate and relevant information. Superintendents also identified factors contributing to their effectiveness. The most common personal factor was having skills in dealing with people (6), having a sense of direction (3), having a sound knowledge base (3), and being politically astute (2).

In sum, effective superintendents were “acutely aware of the political environment, had clear understandings of their relationships with their school boards, saw the need to communicate effectively with relevant publics, and intentionally made time available to visit their schools.” Holdaway and Genge note that superintendents had a clear vision for their systems that they were able to translate into mission statements, goals, and objectives, all with a student focus. They also noted that a concern for and about people emerged as a dominant theme in the study; superintendents believed that people wanted to be involved and to participate in decision making and that this involvement would lead to feelings of ownership in the enterprise. Thirdly, superintendents were interested in curriculum and instructional matters, which led them to spend considerable time in schools interacting with principals, teachers and students on everyday activities (in essence, being present and visible at school sites).


In the article “The Superintendent as Instructional Leader: Findings from Effective School Districts,” Murphy and Hallinger examine how instructional leadership is exercised by superintendents in effective
school districts. The authors interviewed 12 California school superintendents from what they defined as “instructionally effective school districts.” Their findings reveal that the superintendents in these districts were actively involved in managing and directing technical core activities in their districts, using a variety of both direct and indirect leadership tools. Specifically, the authors found that superintendents 1) controlled the development of goals both at the district and school levels; 2) were influential in establishing procedures for the selection of staff; 3) took personal responsibility for the supervision and evaluation of principals; and 4) established and regularly monitored a district wide instructional and curricular focus.


Murphy, Hallinger, and Peterson, in the article “Supervising and Evaluating Principals: Lessons from Effective Districts,” presents the findings of a study conducted of twelve school districts, chosen on the basis of consistent excellence on student achievement scores. In all but the two largest districts the superintendent was personally responsible for supervising and evaluating principals. All 12 superintendents were very active in visiting schools. The range of visits was from a low of 45 to a high of 875 visits per year across all schools in a district. Superintendents at these schools reported spending, on average, approximately ten percent of the total work year on school campuses, a substantially greater percentage than that found in a random sample of elementary school districts in one state in a separate study (Peterson, 1983). While superintendents relied on both planned and impromptu visits, they reported that, more often than not, site personnel did not know when they would be visited. Ten of the twelve superintendents rated the visits as very important and one as fairly important. Superintendents performed 3 different sets of activities as they visited schools: 1) Review activities, such as review of curriculum and instruction, facilities review, and, perception checking; 2) Culture building, such as communication, team building, problem resolution, and, knowledge building; and 3) Supervisory activities, such as role modeling and direct supervision. As part of the supervision process, superintendents met regularly with individual principals, usually between 3 and 6 times per year. Additional meetings between the superintendent and principals to discuss specific problems or review the superintendent’s observations after site-level visits were also frequent.

In sum, the superintendents are actively involved in the supervision and evaluation process in 11 of the effective districts and function as the primary supervisor in 10 of those 11. They act as highly visible leaders on school campuses, are intensely interested in curriculum and instructional matters, and spend a good deal of time supervising principals. They appear to be key agents in linking schools and district offices.

James Sweeny’s article, “Research Synthesis on Effective School Leadership,” is centered on school principal leadership and provides six leadership behaviors that have been consistently associated with schools that are well managed and whose students achieve. Effective principals: 1) emphasize achievement, 2) set instructional strategies, 3) provide an orderly atmosphere, 4) frequently evaluate student progress, 5) coordinate instructional programs, and 6) support teachers. While these six tenets are principal-oriented, they may possibly be generalized for all school administrators to consider.


In “The Public School Superintendency in the Twenty-First Century: The Quest to Define Effective Leadership,” Janet Thomas defines, not characteristics, but challenges that superintendents are likely to encounter in their role as educational leaders. Thomas finds that there are three main challenges of superintendent’s leadership: 1) Instability: Greater demand for accountability coupled with the increasing politicization of the superintendent has made superintendent turnover a major source of concern. 2) Politics: The shifting racial composition of inner-city districts and the dramatic rise in African American and Hispanic populations challenged the legitimacy of local school governance and called for greater racial representations within top-level management. 3) Superintendent and School Board Relations: As more emphasis was placed on effective school district leadership, the relationship between school boards and their superintendents became more critical. The dynamics of this interaction is the single most important factor contributing to their ability to effectively govern the district.


Waters and Marzano, in their article “School District Leadership that Works” present the results of a meta-analysis of the characteristics of effective superintendents. The authors found five district-level leadership responsibilities that have a statistically significant correlation with average student academic achievement. 1) **Collaborative goal-setting**: effective superintendents include all relevant stakeholders in establishing goals for their districts. 2) **Non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction**: effective superintendents ensure that the collaborative goal-setting process results in non-negotiable goals in at least two areas: student achievement and classroom instruction. 3) **Board alignment and support of district goals**: the local board of education is aligned with and supportive of the non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction, and ensures these goals remain the primary focus of the district’s efforts. 4) **Monitoring goals for achievement and instruction**: effective superintendents monitor district progress toward achievement and instructional goals to ensure that these goals remain the driving force behind the district’s actions. 5) **Use of resources to support achievement and instruction goals**: effective superintendents ensure that the necessary resources are allocated to accomplish the district’s goals.
The authors also found that length of superintendent tenure in a district positively correlates to student achievement. Furthermore, statistics show that effective superintendents provide principals with “defined autonomy,” i.e., setting clear, non-negotiable goals for learning and instruction, yet providing school leadership teams with the responsibility and authority for determining how to meet those goals.


According to Michael Zigarelli, in the article “An Empirical Test of Conclusions from Effective Schools Research” all of the effective schools research concluded that principals with strong leadership skills and a willingness to actively participate in the classroom create better schools. Statistics from Zigarelli’s study strongly supports the notion that the more autonomy a principal has in such personnel decisions, the greater students’ school performance will be. However, it cannot be concluded from his study that active principals in general necessarily lead to better schooling.

Support from and cooperation with the superintendent, the school board, and the central office are often cited as contributing to better schooling. In an earlier study (Zigarelli, 1994), Zigarelli reported that better relations and tighter coupling between administration and the classroom culminates in more productive teachers and greater student achievement. In the current study, the quality of relations among the administration, the school, and its teachers was not related to achievement. This was the case whether relations variable were separated or interacted. The same was true for the teacher empowerment constructs: teacher influence in school policy, classroom policy, and course content. None of these variables approached significance in either direction.
Mentor Resources and Readings
# PACE and LEAD!

- acknowledge situation
- acknowledge difficulty
- acknowledge shift!

Describe desired state:
- what
- why
- how
- when

## LANGUAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>disequilibrium</th>
<th>we</th>
<th>effort</th>
<th>new</th>
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<tr>
<td>improve</td>
<td>together</td>
<td>forward</td>
<td>messy</td>
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<tr>
<td>potential</td>
<td>opportunity</td>
<td>alongside</td>
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<td>privilege</td>
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Remember:
- Open body language
- Invitational voice
- Rehearse
Elite performers say that their practices have to be so rigorous and true-to-life that by the time they get into true competition, game or match, their performance is almost automatic. If you practice well, slight changes in a performance or game time activity won’t throw you off. To the contrary, if you haven’t rehearsed enough, little things can have a big negative impact on performance.

Types of challenges that likely need rehearsal:
1. Changes in assessments being used, system-wide
2. Adoption and expectation of use of common curricula, materials
3. Expectation that all struggling students will receive additional intervention support
4. Expectation for frequent collaboration with colleagues
5. Expectation of public sharing of data and student performance results
6. Expectation of delivering instruction differently than previously implemented
Example of Rehearsal Cycle

1. Key message to be delivered-
   - Results from universal screening will be discussed and shared during collaborative meetings

2. Potential Pitfalls
   - Teachers are fearful that their students’ results will not look strong
   - Teachers do not trust and philosophically believe in the assessment measure
   - Teachers are not sure how to interpret the results and do not want to be embarrassed in front of their peers
   - Teachers didn’t give the assessments and don’t want that to be noticed in the group
   - Teachers do not know how to retrieve the data displays and are too uncomfortable to ask for help

3. Who might be bothered by this conversation and meeting
   - Second and Fifth grade teachers

4. Key vocabulary or phrases that I want to use
   - Supporting all of our students
   - Celebrating what our students can do
   - New experience for all of us
   - Opportunity for us to learn together
   - No blame and team support
   - Any and all questions are safe and accepted
   - I am learning alongside each of you

5. Sequence of conversation
   - Beginning a process of collaboratively reviewing student progress
   - Results will be shared amongst our grade level teams
   - Goal is to provide collegially support, examine what is really happening with student performance and organize ourselves to support student learning in a stronger way
   - A few guidelines for our work (no blame, focus on students, solution focused, fact the facts)
   - Learning beside you and committed to the process of looking closely at what our students can do.
   - In order to have a collaborative, efficient meeting, here are the things I expect.
     - Each teacher brings ( ) data to the meeting
     - We will use protocols for our discussions
     - We will analyze the data in a similar sequence each time
     - We will start meetings right on time
     - Your attendance is expected

6. Practice the conversation with a colleague if possible
Given the reality that group development is dynamic, not linear; following are some strategies for skillful leaders to employ in working toward developing smarter groups that embrace positivity, inquiry, and effective collaboration.

To develop shared understanding and be ready to take collective action, working groups need knowledge and skill in two ways of talking. One way of talking — dialogue — leads to collective meaning making and the development of shared understanding. The other way of talking — discussion — leads to decisions that stay made.

Dialogue honors the social-emotional brain, building a sense of connection, belonging and safety. As a shape for conversations, it connects us to our underlying motivations and mental models. This way of talking forms a foundation for coherent sustained effort and community building. In dialogue, we hear phrases like, “An assumption I have is . . .,” and “I’d be curious to hear what other people are thinking about this issue.”

Discussion, in its more skillful form, requires conversation that is infused with sustained critical thinking, careful consideration of options and respect for conflicting points of view. This way of talking leads to decision making that serves the group’s and school’s vision, values and goals. In discussion, we hear phrases like, “We need to define the problem we are solving before jumping to solutions,” and “I’d like to see the data that these assumptions are based on before we go much further.”

8. The Path of Dialogue

Dialogue is a reflective learning process in which group members seek to understand one another’s viewpoints and deeply held assumptions. The word dialogue comes from the Greek dialogos. Dia means “through” and logos means “word.” In this meaning making through words, group members inquire into their own and others’ beliefs, values and mental models to better understand how things work in their world. In dialogue, listening is as important as speaking. For skilled group members, much of the work is done internally.

Dialogue creates an emotional and cognitive safety zone in which ideas flow for examination without judgment. Although many of the capabilities and tools of dialogue and skilled discussion are the same, their core intentions are quite different and require different personal and collective monitoring processes.
Monitoring Dialogue

Mindful group members pay attention to three essential elements during productive dialogue. They monitor:

- themselves
- the processes of the dialogue
- the new whole that is emerging within the group.

Self

Dialogue is first and foremost a listening practice. When we “listen to our listening,” we notice whether we are internally debating with the speaker, reviewing our mental catalogue of related information and personal anecdotes or composing a response. Noticing these common internal processes allows us to switch them off so that we can hear others without judging.

Dialogue requires choice making. Typical choices include how and when to talk:

- Do we paraphrase prior comments to check for understanding and/or synthesize?
- Do we inquire into the ideas and assumptions of others?
- Do we put a new idea or perspective on the table to widen the frame?

Suspension is an essential internal skill in dialogue. To suspend judgment, group members temporarily set aside their own perceptions, feelings and impulses and carefully monitor their internal experience. Points of personal conflict can easily emerge when we believe that others are not hearing us or that they are distorting our point of view. Points of conflict also surface when our own values conflict with those of a speaker. These areas of discomfort influence our listening and our responses, which in turn influence the thoughts and behaviors of other group members.

Process

Dialogue as a process requires focusing on the goal of developing shared understanding. In our action-oriented work environments, this is often countercultural. Yet, in every group with which we’ve worked, all the participants could recite examples of decisions that were poorly conceived, poorly communicated, simply ignored or, in the worst cases, violated by many organizational members without consequence. At the root of all these stories were group processes that were not thought out, but rather often hurried and inappropriately facilitated. The rush to action pushed unclear decision-making processes and timelines onto the group without sufficient attention to developing a shared understanding of both problems and solutions.

Understanding as the Outcome

Well-crafted dialogue leads to understanding. This is the foundation for conflict resolution, consensus and professional community. Decisions that don’t stay made are often the result of group members feeling left out and/or having their ideas discounted by the group. Dialogue gives voice to all parties and all viewpoints.
9. The Path of Discussion

Discussion, in its Latin root discutere, means “to shake apart.”

It focuses on the parts and their relationships to one another — the causes, the effects and the ripple effects of proposed actions and solutions. In its most ineffective form, discussion consists of serial sharing and serial advocacy without much group-member inquiry into the thinking and proposals of others. Participants attempt to reach decisions through a variety of voting and consensus techniques. When discussion is unskilled and dialogue is absent, decisions are often low quality, represent the opinions of the most vocal members or leader, lack group commitment and do not stay made.

Three elements shape skilled discussions:

- clarity about decision-making processes and authority
- knowledge of the boundaries surrounding the topics open to the group’s decision making authority
- standards for orderly decision-making meetings—most meetings are, in fact, structured discussions.

Monitoring Discussion

Mindful group members pay attention to three essential elements during productive discussion. They monitor:

- themselves
- the processes of skilled discussion
- the details of the problem-solving, planning and decision-making processes in which they are engaged

Self

Productive discussions require group members to have emotional and mental flexibility. When our goal is to influence the thinking of others and we give up the model of “winning and losing,” we are more able to notice our thoughts and actions, and the effects of those thoughts and actions on others.

From the balcony, we can make the most strategic choices about how and when to participate:

- Should I advocate or should I inquire?
- At what points should I press?
- When should I probe for detail or let go?
- How might I phrase an idea for greatest influence?

These are the same internal skills that teachers employ when they monitor and adjust in their classrooms.
Process

Skilled discussion as a process requires mindfulness about focusing on one topic and applying one process tool at a time. When topics and processes blur, group members lose focus. To maintain focus requires clear structure, purposeful facilitation, impulse control on the part of individual group members and recovery strategies if the group strays off course.

Effective group members share responsibility with the facilitator for maintaining the flow of the discussion, for encouraging other group members to share knowledge and ideas, for hearing and exposing points of confusion or murkiness.

Decision as the Outcome

Decision, in its Latin root decidere, means “to cut off or determine.” In practice this means to cut off some choices. The purpose of discussion is to eliminate some ideas from a field of possibilities and allow the stronger ideas to prevail. Groups must learn to separate people from ideas in order for this to work effectively. If individuals “own” ideas, then to cut the idea away is the same as cutting the person away. Ideas, once stated, should belong to the group, not to individuals. In this way they can be shaped, modified and discarded to serve the group’s greater purposes.

Notes:
The word “boss” often carries a negative connotation, while the word “leader” is positive. All of us aspire to be leaders, not bosses. But using the word “leader” here would invite attention away from a seldom-explored reality: To be a leader in an organization, you must first be comfortable in a position of authority — as a boss. To gain comfort, as well as confidence and competence as a boss, you’ll face a number of predictable interpersonal and emotional growth challenges that you must use to expand your mind-and-skill set rather than retrench into defensiveness.

THE DYNAMICS OF AUTHORITY

As a first time principal or administrator, you’ll be on the receiving end of the dynamics of authority in your interaction with others, those who report to you and others whose lives are touched by your decisions. How will you know the dynamics of authority? When you’re with people who work under you, you’ll see, hear, and feel conversation change from inclusion to exclusion in words, tone, demeanor, and content. People will:

• Wait for you to speak;
• Speak to you, not others in a meeting;
• Change the subject when you enter a room;
• Talk in a different tone, often about different content than before you were boss;
  • Constantly interpret what you say, often attributing conscious negative intent;
• Scour your words for inconsistencies, contradictions, double-meanings, misstatements, and mistakes;
• Quote you mistakenly and out of context;
• Give you feedback that makes no sense and is very hurtful;

BY BARRY JENTZ
• Attribute words and ideas to you that you don’t recognize;
• Assume that you have much more power to change people and things than you actually do; and
• Say to you, “And what are you going to do about that!”

When you interact with people who don’t report to you but must live with the consequences of your decisions (parents and others in the community), you’ll find that people will sometimes:

• Demand that you do what they want, quite apart from reason;
• Threaten to “go over your head”;  
• Invite you to events solely because of your role;
• Expect you to be instantly available and always accessible;
• Gang up on you to exercise influence;
• Criticize you in public e-mails, letters to the editor, etc.;
• Defer to you in public and work against you in private; and
• Say wonderful things about you and give you gifts.

CONFUSION IS THE NAME OF THE GAME

In your intrapersonal world, you’ll suddenly spend a lot of time with the onerous task of wondering whether others are reacting to you or to your role as an authority figure. The task is onerous because you’ll inevitably be thrown back on yourself as never before and experience a heightened questioning of how much of what is going on is “me” and how much is “them responding to my role” or the “situation.”

Answers to the questions raised by the dynamics of authority won’t come quickly or easily, so you’ll spend more of your internal time confused. Your confusion will be exacerbated by the simple fact that you’ll face lots of problems that are inherently confusing because they don’t have easy, technical answers (Heifetz and Linsky 2002). Initially, you’ll tend to be unaware of your confusion or ashamed of it, so you’ll hide it and bluff, deny, blame, or take charge, reacting to complex problems with easy, technical answers, which won’t work. As a result, you’ll be more confused. So, you’ll need to look inward and take on the task of discovering and changing your attitude toward confusion so that you experience it not as a liability but as a resource, as a starting place for personal and organizational learning (Jentz and Murphy 2005).

FEELING POWERLESS IS PREDICTABLE

Your confusion may be compounded by the unsettling discovery that a position of authority actually leaves you feeling powerless to accomplish the significant things that led you to take the position in the first place. Occasions for this unsettling discovery will be the refusal of people who report to you to respond to your positive intentions, directives, and powers of persuasion. Such occasions can be many and varied. Only a few examples are: You may be an outsider who is taking over a position in a system where insiders were regularly promoted; you may be an insider who must supervise your friends or a young person who must supervise older people; you may not believe in political appointments and yet work where political appointments are the norm; and, without fail, you’ll have to supervise poor-performing people who will have power to frustrate your efforts to get them to change. All of these situations arouse feelings of powerlessness that are jolting, not because you can’t anticipate them in your mind, but because of the depth of the pain.

Other occasions will arouse feelings of powerlessness, in particular those occasions where you discover that your new position doesn’t give you the freedom to act alone, for example, to correct the obvious mistakes you saw made by your prior boss or the ridiculous deficiencies in the organization that were so clear to you in your position as an individual contributor. Where you expected to get things done independently through the authority of your position, you’ll find instead that your ability to get things done depends on people outside of your unit of the organization, over whom you have no control. Expecting the freedom of acting alone, you’ll encounter the restriction of interdependence (Hill 2007) and the consequent need to consult and build relationships. That reality of interdependence and its restrictions will trigger frustration and feelings of powerlessness.

Feeling powerless doesn’t have to result in behav-

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ing as if you are, in fact, powerless and must forfeit your hopes for improving performance. Curiously though, you must respect your unwanted feelings of powerlessness. Accept rather than reject them. To get started in doing so, remember that leadership requires courage. Think of your feelings of powerlessness as a by-product of your courage and commitment to learn the realities of leadership, instead of automatically assuming that your feelings are a self-evident sign of your failure to act independently. Use your feelings as a prompt to stop, step back, get feedback, and open yourself to questioning the assumptions that you inevitably bring to your first leadership position, such as, “I’ll be able to act independently.” Question and change such assumptions, and as a result you’ll feel powerless less often, and, when you do, you’ll have a perspective from which you can change your view of yourself from being a self-evident failure to a person with the courage to learn about the reality of interdependence.

**Even though you haven’t been a boss, you must behave as if you have, right from the outset.**

**AM I A FRAUD?**

When you’ve exhausted your repertoire of ways to get a poor performer to improve, you may feel powerless. On the other hand, when you tell someone to do something and the person salutes, you may be surprised that you feel like a fraud. Feeling like a fraud is predictable because even though you haven’t been a boss, you must behave as if you have, right from the outset. Your behavior must necessarily be “out ahead” of your emotions. In the gap between your required, authoritative behavior and lack of emotional readiness, a fraud voice often inserts itself. For example, you might give someone advice about a difficult matter and watch as if you were but an onlooker as the person thanks you and leaves to act on your advice. Momentarily, you might begin to think, “Is she really going to do that? I’m not sure I believe what I said!” When people do what you say only because you said it, your emotions can say silently, “Hey, it’s just me. You don’t have to take my word for it!”

Comfort yourself by remembering that, on occasion, you can’t avoid feeling like a fraud any more than you can avoid feeling powerless. The feelings themselves aren’t a problem, but your relationship to them can be. Feeling that you are fraud can become problematic if you bow to the voice in your head that accuses you of not being fit for leadership, because you’ll start trying to get rid of the feeling, and that futile effort will rob you of energy. Alternatively, you’ll feel compassion and renewed energy if you say to yourself, “Feeling like a fraud isn’t a sign of weakness or unfitness for leadership. Emotional readiness for authority lags behavior, necessarily. I need time to develop the emotional muscle to stand behind myself.”

**WITH SEPARATION COMES LOSS**

More subtle but no less problematic, you may experience a sense of loss and sadness that accompanies separation as other people’s actions exclude rather than include you. You can recognize the dynamics of separation within yourself if you hear yourself thinking, or perhaps even saying, “But I’m the same person I was yesterday, before I took this job?!”

Naturally, you’ll likely yearn to be included as you sense exclusion. Put differently, you might feel isolated and alone as you yearn for connection. To use a psychological phrase, do not “act out” your yearning for connection. In fact, you aren’t “just me” anymore, and if you express such thoughts other than to intimates, you’ll lose trust and credibility and the opportunity to lead. People under you will think that you’re the only one among them who doesn’t get it, and those who take the risk of saying so won’t tend to repeat themselves after you talk more about being “just me” or “I’m only another member of the team.” They’ll know what you don’t: That you’re blind to the dynamics of authority and your own lack of readiness and, as a result, are dangerous.

**PAIN DOESN’T HAVE TO MEAN SOMETHING IS WRONG**

Listen to your inner voice to see if you recognize:

- Yearning to be included as you sense exclusion — put differently, you might feel isolated and alone as you yearn for connection;
- A sense of confusion about a lot of things;
- Feelings of powerlessness (or inadequacy or doubts about your abilities);
- Wondering if you’re a fraud;
- Feeling sad and experiencing loss even as you think (and people tell you) you should be happy; and
- Doubting your decision to take the position, wishing that you could throw off the “robes” of authority and rejoin — to be again a “just me.”

Again, remind yourself that these internal experiences don’t mean something is wrong with you. Others have been there before, and still others will be in the future. To become comfortable, confident, and competent as a boss, you must struggle through
a transition from knowing and valuing yourself for your technical work (as a teacher, architect, computer technician) to knowing and valuing yourself for your managerial work. The two kinds of work are unimaginably different, and we can’t know that profound difference until we make the switch. (And after we make the switch, we can’t explain the difference to friends who have chosen not to be a boss.)

**GROW UP TO BEING “ABOVE”**

Choosing to be a boss results in having people under you in the organizational hierarchy. The phrase “people under you” makes some people who choose a boss position uncomfortable. If your inside squirmed when you read the word “under,” you may struggle with being “above” people, though you have chosen to be so by becoming a boss. “Above” in a hierarchy means that you have more power over others’ lives than they have over yours. So, naturally, they’re more vulnerable in their relationship to you than you are to them, quite apart from how vulnerable you may actually feel.

You must come to terms with the fact that you have moved into an “above” role and have no choice but to learn and grow the internal muscle required to be above.” Such growth may be difficult because being above might connote bad and call to your mind a bad-boss experience before choosing to lead. If so, you run the risk of rejecting the bad-boss experience and, in the process, rejecting the very legitimacy of positional authority, often by trying to give it to others in the name of “empowerment.” Of course, you can go in the opposite direction, where instead of rejecting the power that comes with the position, you relish it and abuse it by using it unilaterally.

**ANTICIPATE BEING TOO AUTHORITATIVE OR TOO COLLABORATIVE**

Particularly when you’re beginning an “above” position for the first time, you’ll unconsciously err to the extremes of being too authoritative or too collaborative. From a psychological perspective, your newness to positional authority can lead you to dominate others to get them “on the right track” or “disappearing” in an attempt to make room for others to be “involved” or “empowered.” From the perspective of leadership, you err to the extreme of acting as a Savior, Authoritarian — “I have the answers, follow me” — or from the opposite extreme, as a Pal, Egalitarian — “You have the answers and I am here to support you.” And, of course, you err to either extreme with good intentions, often in the name of the “children” or “students.” Parents know the authoritative-collaborative tension in the slang terms of hard-soft or tough-tender: What expectations do you set and hold to as boundaries, and when do you make exceptions because of extenuating circumstance? When do you put family goals, culture, needs, and rules first versus putting an individual child’s conflicting demands first?

No one would consciously adopt either of the “fictional” extremes in leadership described immediately above. Indeed, you’ll think that you strike the right authoritative-collaborative balance between extremes of exercising unilateral control or surrendering your authority to others. In reality, the internal and external pulls on you in a leadership position frequently result in your slipping into one of these positions or sometimes flipping back and forth between them. Since you’re blind to this dynamic, your actions fail to match your rhetoric and, despite your good intentions, you end up losing trust even as you assume its presence. If told that you say one thing but do quite another, you tend to reject the feedback because, given your blindness, you don’t see what others see in you and you begin to feel misunderstood or attacked by people who from your perspective are either misguided or ill-intentioned. Blind to discrepancies between your professed and actual practice and thus unable to close the gaps, you lose trust and fail to gain credibility, the very common ground that is necessary for others to join you in advancing your agendas for change.

**COMMUNICATE TO LEARN, NOT JUST TO CONVINCE, DIRECT, OR INFORM**

With occasional exceptions, by yourself, you can’t discover your own blind spots in regard to the authoritative-collaborative balance. By definition, there’s little sense or hope in sending a blind man to look for sight. So, it’s critical to your success at the outset that you commit yourself to learning how to communicate to learn, as opposed to communicate simply to persuade, direct, or inform. You must learn with and through others about your own practice, otherwise you can’t make needed adjustments on the authoritative-collaborative dimension of your leadership. Toward that end:

- Set an expectation that you want feedback.
- Seek feedback, even pursue it, if only because many people are temperamentally disinclined...
they believe it is not their “place”) to give feedback to people “above” them in the hierarchy.

• Force yourself not to react to negative feedback defensively; instead, discipline yourself to listen reflectively, particularly when you’re deeply hurt by what you hear. Part of your discipline will be to expect that potentially useful feedback will hurt badly in the moment you receive it and make no sense; in fact, it will seem downright wrong, and you’ll be inclined to attribute negative intent to the person who gave it.

• Find a trusted person with whom to make new sense of feedback, and make needed adjustments in your leadership practice on the authoritative-collaborative continuum.

• Read stories about leaders who receive feedback (sometimes jolting) and use it to make successful adjustments. For example, read “Triumph at Work, Trouble at Home,” “Are You Calling Me a Liar?!” and “They Come Back with the Same Problems!” in Talk Sense: Communicating to Lead and Learn, (Research for Better Teaching, 2007)

• Work with a leadership coach or join a support group that meets regularly.

CONSIDER USING AN ENTRY PLAN

One way to quiet your apprehension about beginning an administrative position for the first time is to imagine walking your way, or “imaging” your way, through the first six months to a year in the position. Designing an Entry Plan is a form of imaging — of thinking (and writing) your way through the sequences of contact you plan to have with each of your key constituencies during your first day, first week, first month, first six months, first year — as you hold in mind a picture of where you want to be at the end of the year (or even three years) (Jentz and Wofford 2008; Jentz and Murphy 2005). The product, a written plan, benefits you in two ways:

• You’ll have a blueprint to guide you and to fall back on when you get confused and lost, which is a natural, unavoidable part of leadership work.

• You’ll have vicariously experienced some of what is ahead, so when it actually happens, you won’t be there for the first time.

Finally, this article errs in presenting the struggles rather than the satisfactions and joys of beginning a position of authority for the first time. Those positive feelings include the thrill of being chosen, the deep sense of personal satisfaction that comes with reaching and attaining a position of status and power, the excitement of launching ourselves on a new adventure, the thrill that comes with others taking our lead, and the personal sense of self-worth and hope that follows from improving the lives of the adults and children under our care. By not delineating the upside experience, I don’t mean to devalue it. I have written about the “growth tasks” because it’s much less likely that you’ll have someone to keep you company when you enter this internal territory. If you know something about the terrain, you’re less likely to feel alone when you doubt yourself and wonder if you’re losing your marbles.

REFERENCES


