

Essential Knowledge and Skills for Effective School Leadership

Based on the work of the Blue Ribbon Panel on School Leadership
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1. LEADERS KNOW AND UNDERSTAND WHAT IT MEANS AND WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A LEADER

Leadership is the act of identifying important goals and then motivating and enabling others to devote themselves and all necessary resources to achievement. It includes summoning one's self and others to learn and adapt to the new situation represented by the goal.

2. LEADERS HAVE A VISION FOR SCHOOLS THAT THEY CONSTANTLY SHARE AND PROMOTE

Leaders have a vision of the ideal, can articulate this vision to any audience, and work diligently to make it a reality. Leaders also know how to build upon and sustain a vision that preceded them.

3. LEADERS COMMUNICATE CLEARLY AND EFFECTIVELY

Leaders possess effective writing and presentation skills. They express themselves clearly, and are confident and capable of responding to the hard questions in a public forum. They are also direct and precise questioners, always seeking understanding.

4. LEADERS COLLABORATE AND COOPERATE WITH OTHERS

Leaders communicate high expectations and provide accurate information to foster understanding and to maintain trust and confidence. Leaders reach out to others for support and assistance, build partnerships, secure resources, and share credit for success and accomplishments. School leaders manage change through effective relationships with school boards.

5. LEADERS PERSEVERE AND TAKE THE "LONG VIEW"

Leaders build institutions that endure. They "stay the course," maintain focus, anticipate and work to overcome resistance. They create capacity within the organization to achieve and sustain its vision.

6. LEADERS SUPPORT, DEVELOP AND NURTURE STAFF

Leaders set a standard for ethical behavior. They seek diverse perspectives and alternative points of view. They encourage initiative, innovation, collaboration, and a

strong work ethic. Leaders expect and provide opportunities for staff to engage in continuous personal and professional growth. They recognize individual talents and assign responsibility and authority for specific tasks. Leaders celebrate accomplishments. They identify recruit, mentor, and promote potential leaders.

7. LEADERS HOLD THEMSELVES AND OTHERS RESPONSIBLE AND ACCOUNTABLE

Leaders embrace and adhere to comprehensive planning that improves the organization. They use data to determine the present state of the organization, identify root cause problems, propose solutions, and validate accomplishments. Leaders accept responsibility and accountability and manage resources effectively and efficiently. They require staff to establish and meet clear indicators of success. Leaders in education also know and understand good pedagogy and effective classroom practices and support sustained professional development. They recognize the importance of learning standards and significance of assessments.

8. LEADERS NEVER STOP LEARNING AND HONING THEIR SKILLS

Leaders are introspective and reflective. Leaders ask questions and seek answers. Leaders in education are familiar with current research and best practice, not only in education, but also in other related fields. They maintain a personal plan for self-improvement and continuous learning, and balance their professional and personal lives, making time for other interests.

9. LEADERS HAVE THE COURAGE TO TAKE INFORMED RISKS

Leaders embrace informed, planned change and recognize that everyone may not support change. Leaders work to win support and are willing to take action in support of their vision even in the face of opposition.