

The Superintendent as an Instructional Leader

Essential Professional Standards

1. **Develop leadership and district culture.**

Involves promoting academic excellence, empowerment, risk taking, managing time effectively, creating a conducive district climate, etc.

2. **Policy and Governance.**

Develop policy for working with the board, internal and external programs, relate policy to state and federal regulations, and policy to avoid civil and criminal liabilities.

3. **Communication and Community Relations.**

Articulate district vision, goals, build consensus with the community, deal with issues on a timely basis, build financial support programs, and formulate democratic strategies for referenda.

4. **Organizational Management.**

Define processes for gathering, analyzing and using data for decision making. An understanding of legal issues, fiscal reporting, changes process, technological applications.

5. **Curriculum Planning and Development.**

Design curriculum plans that enhance leaning and teaching in multiple contexts. A superintendent should be able to demonstrate understanding of learning taxonomies, goals, objectives, and cognitive development and learning theories, use of computers to and other technologies to enhance learning. Conduct assessments of present and future learning needs of students.

6. **Instructional Management.**

Be knowledgeable about research findings on learning and instructional strategies, classroom management theories and learning techniques, student achievement monitoring and reporting systems.

7. **Human Resources Management.**

Evaluation systems and supervision models must be in place to improve performance of staff and student learning, legal requirements for selection, retention and dismissal.

8. **Values and Ethics for Leadership.**

Model appropriate value systems, ethics and moral leadership. Understand the role of schooling in a democratic society. Formulate plans to coordinate social, health and other communities to support children's learning.

The power of the superintendent's leadership in shaping school district culture

1. Creation and management of culture is the real important thing that leaders do (Schein, 1992)
2. Model respect by treating everybody the same.
3. Strive to have support and trust of staff
4. Hire the best and give enough elbowroom to staff to do their thing.
5. Be a change agent and understand that change is stressful. Acknowledge others who might be resisting change.

Factors supporting success or failure of school improvement efforts

1. Largely determined by willingness of stakeholders to undertake the particular reforms.
2. District and staff commitment to staff development
3. Scarcity of resources
4. Change in leadership

Findings on effective schools 1995, Congressional report on effective schools

1. Provide challenging learning experiences where there are high expectations for all students
2. Develop effective techniques for nurturing staff collaboration and participation in decision-making.

3. Provide meaningful opportunities for professional growth

Characteristics for schools demonstrating improvement

1. Focus on clear standards
2. Team work is a way of life
3. Principal is a strong instructional leader
4. Commitment by staff to help all students achieve
5. Multiple changes to improve student learning

Dealing with the impact of change

1. Give staff adequate time to deal with new roles
2. Communication and involvement by staff and other stakeholders critical
3. Adequate preparation for new resources
4. Solicit parental and community involvement
5. Awareness of achievement variability

Effective media relations

1. Start with a media relations plan. This involves selecting a spokesperson, working with the board to clarify issues, keeping others informed, budgeting for your message, consulting a media trainer,
2. Work closely with spokesperson
3. Prepare to meet the press
4. Help the media to help you spread your message
5. Have a plan for handling media relations during a crisis
6. Walk in a reporter's shoes. Do not ask to see the story before it's printed. Make sure there is accurate and balanced reporting on information given to the press.

Handling Community Criticism

1. When confronted with criticism check whether the issue is personal, coming from an organized group and whether colleagues have handled such issues.
2. Plan. Check Board of Education policy for specific procedures to handle complaints.
3. Establish clear lines of responsibility
4. Suggest appropriate responses for dealing with irate critics
5. Communicate importance. Have your facts ready, be calm and always respectful, flexible, clear, honest, etc

6. Evaluate what went right and wrong to prepare for the next critic
7. Know your district and community culture
8. Do not make assumptions and treat each situation differently

Specific techniques to cope with critics

1. Build coalitions by enlisting the support of other stakeholders
2. Communicate by using open and two-way communication
3. Identify key communicators
4. Work with opinion leaders
5. Critics are potential saboteurs. Use Systematic Development of Informed Consent (SDIC). Encourage dialogue, debate and discussion on key issues.
6. Communicate with your internal audience because some are very knowledgeable about what happens in the community.
7. Allow debate
8. Keep your sense of humor
9. Know how to deal with media
10. Share the honest truth
11. Invite the community in
12. Use shared decision making
13. Use timelines effectively
14. Take advantage of opportunity

Creating a caring school community

1. Have high expectations for academic achievement
2. High expectations for student behavior
3. Foster close ties between students and adults through teacher teams, persistence groupings, teacher advisories, smaller schools, clusters
4. Create strong healthy bonds among students through conflict resolution, class meetings, cooperative learning, multiage grouping, peer tutoring/mentoring, school traditions
5. Curricular and extra curricular approaches can foster a caring community through: thematic units, character education, community service, extracurricular activities
6. The hidden curriculum can be best achieved through staff modeling and a physical environment that conveys messages to students
7. Promote parent and community involvement

- a. Parents should be helped develop an understanding of schools' programs and policies
 - b. Establish regular contact between school and home
 - c. Involve parents as educators in the home
 - d. Welcome parents at the school
 - e. Involve parents who have limited English proficiency
8. Lessons every educator should know about technology
 9. Technology should be used to bolster student learning
 10. Technology is a tool not a subject
 11. Find technology savvies and nurture them
 12. Provide adequate time for training
 13. Strive to build a technology literate work force
 14. Technology cannot fix or the problems in schools
 15. Stress reduction and wellness
 16. Hold the power to control your own wellness
 - a. Personality influences. Come to grips with your personality
 - b. Modify your behavior
 - c. Know that as a superintendent no one is indispensable
 - i. Steps you can take
 - ii. Go on vacation
 - iii. Never call the office if you are on vacation but leave your number for emergencies only
 - iv. Delegate power and authority
 - v. Take all the time allotted to you
 - vi. Relax

9. Learn to deal with conflict
10. Regularly check how your team is doing

Creating a school governance team to raise student achievement

1. Create a strong foundation for teamwork
2. Get the best team players
3. Define roles for team players
4. Train the team
5. Adopt good team strategies
6. Mobilize support for the team

Ten things superintendents can do to create and maintain an effective school governance team

1. Establish a firm foundation for teamwork
2. Nurture mutual respect and support
3. Observe and respect the distinctions in each other's roles
4. Be a coach and not just a team player
5. Communication must be two-way and as frequent as possible
6. Avoid surprises
7. Do not invite micromanagement
8. Do not waste teammates' time

References

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