

Leadership Essay

As an educational leader, I take ownership over my influence and the impact my efficacy has on the learning and success of our students. For that reason, it is imperative that I am confident in my leadership philosophy and can clearly articulate it to those I work alongside as well as the families I serve.

I am a leader who recognizes the benefits of empowerment over management. As Scott Williams (2011) reminds us, there's a huge difference between managing and leading, and in the complex, human dependent world of education, we cannot afford to rely on the former. True leaders develop other leaders to carry the mission. It's not about positional authority. It's about building a tribe of voluntary followers who believe in the purpose of what we are trying to achieve (Williams, 2011). I will work with and listen to all stakeholders including staff, students and families to facilitate decisions that reflect our collective perspective and commitment because working together is the only way to ensure the success of each and every student in our system.

I am a leader who purposefully seeks multiple frames when viewing a problem or opportunity, acknowledging that this will only happen with intention. As Bradbury, Vess Halbur and Halbur (2011) assert, by viewing decision making and change through the lens of Bolman and Deal's four frames, leaders begin to see influences or aspects of the organization that might have otherwise escaped them. Ignoring this holistic view of the system is a recipe for bad decisions, while utilizing all four frames, including structural, human resources, political, and symbolic, increases the likelihood that all aspects will have been considered and all perspectives tapped (Bradbury, Vess Halbur, & Halbur, 2011). In particular, when faced with large scope

decisions such as a schoolwide implementation of an initiative, I will pause to sketch the change through each frame, tap people in my school for whom that frame represents a natural framework or lens with which they view the work, and use the support of each perspective and person to implement decisions and change that respect the multifaceted organization in which we operate. Strong leadership means knowing my own perspective is limited, so tapping the people and tools necessary to open my worldview is an imperative step for creating meaningful change.

I am a leader who avoids over complication in favor of focusing on what truly matters. It is too easy to busy ourselves with the unimportant when what we really need is a laser like focus on our ultimate mission; High expectations. High achievement for all. No excuses. As Reeves (2007) has made clear, traditional strategic planning is riddled with superfluous action steps, goals, objectives, and results that often do not translate into student outcomes. The overcomplication of the planning process can fool us into thinking we have made progress toward goals simply by checking off the boxes of being busy (Reeves, 2007). Instead, I want to lead each person toward focused commitment to student learning and success through Reeves' (2007) "One-Page Plans" that keep things simple, creating the conditions in which "every participant understands his or her role in executing the plan" (para. 11). Leadership relies on full commitment to our objectives, which only happens when those objectives are clear to all.

Ultimately, I am a leader who believes in fostering the leadership and dedication of those I work with, expands my perspective to see all aspects of the organization, and uses both of those to leverage strategic plans that help focus the work of every individual in our system. This type of leadership espouses the belief that it takes the commitment and focus of each to person in an

organization to move the dial for student learning, which absolutely reflects my belief. We must all be in this together.

References

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