



Accomplished Leadership Series



Action-Based Conversation Frameworks A Facilitator's Guide to Exploring Accomplished Practice in Leadership

A Collection of Conversation Frameworks grounded in the DRAFT National Board Principal's Standards and 9 Core Propositions.



Accomplished educational leaders continuously cultivate their understanding of leadership and the change process to meet high levels of performance.



Accomplished educational leaders have a clear vision and inspire and engage stakeholders in developing and realizing the mission.



Accomplished educational leaders manage and leverage systems and processes to achieve desired results.



Accomplished educational leaders are committed to student and adult learners and to their development.



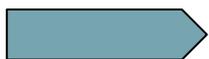
Accomplished Educational leaders drive, facilitate, and monitor the teaching and learning process.



Accomplished educational leaders act with a sense of urgency to foster a cohesive culture of learning.



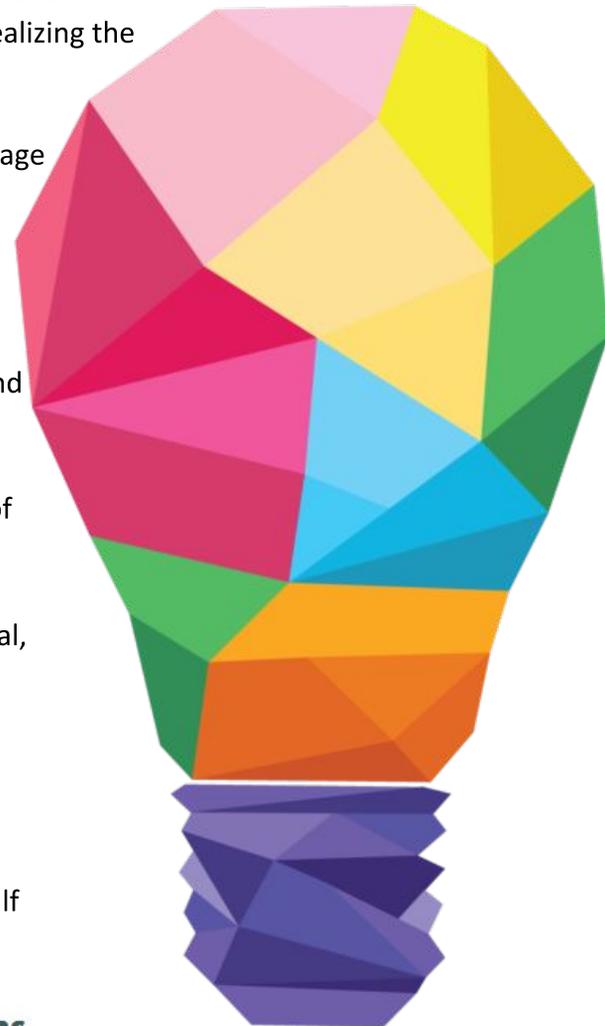
Accomplished educational leaders model professional, ethical behavior and expect it from others.



Accomplished educational leaders ensure equitable learning opportunities and high expectations for all.



Accomplished educational leaders advocate on behalf of their schools, communities and profession.



**National Board Core Propositions
for Accomplished Educational Leaders™**

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Action Based Conversation Frameworks

Improving Leadership through the Body of Knowledge around Accomplished Practice

NB Accomplished Principals Standards: Reprinted with permission from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. All rights reserved.

Launch: Developing Norms, Exploring Standards, Identifying a Problem of Practice (pgs. 4-55)

Participants will learn how norms govern how group members work and interact with each other. They will learn to lead a team in establishing and maintaining norms. Participants will engage with the DRAFT National Board Administrator and PSEL standards to discuss the impact on leadership practice. Participants will identify a Problem of Practice, drawing on their own professional experience and context using mentor texts to craft their Problem of Practice Statement that describes an issue and includes focus questions.

Core Prop 1: Leadership for Results (pgs. 56-79)

Topic 1: Assessing Leadership Style and Leveraging Resources: *Accomplished educational leaders continuously cultivate their understanding of leadership and the change process to meet high levels of performance.*

Participants will examine their practice in the area of leadership and consider the type of leader that they are. They will examine their areas of strength and consider their areas of potential growth. They will also consider the power of collaborating with teachers in leadership roles.

(DRAFT National Board Standard 1: Leadership for Results; PSEL Standard Standard 10 School Improvement)

Core Prop 2: Vision and Mission (pgs. 80-95)

Topic 2: The Art and Impact of Crafting a Shared Vision: *Accomplished educational leaders have a clear vision and inspire and engage stakeholders in developing and realizing the mission.*

Participants will explore and discuss the importance and ways to engage stakeholders in the creation of a school level vision statement. They will review current research, case studies, and craft an action plan to develop or revise their current vision.

(DRAFT National Board Standard 2: Vision and Mission; PSEL Standard 1: Mission, Vision, and Core Values)

Core Prop 3: Strategic Management (pgs. 96-139)

Topic 3: Strategic Management: *Accomplished educational leaders manage and leverage systems and processes to achieve desired results.*

Educational leaders find themselves pulled in innumerable directions during their work. Participants will explore the definition of leadership and the various forms it can take within an organization.

(DRAFT National Board Standard 6: Strategic Management; PSEL Standard 9: Operations and Management)

Core Prop 4: Learners and Learning (pgs.140-204)

Topic 4: Tapping Into Resources, Recognizing Individuals, Fostering Continuous Improvement
Accomplished educational leaders are committed to student and adult learners and to their development.

Participants will delve into the needs of student and adult learning, exploring similarities and differences. They will then consider what the teacher needs to know and be able to do to be successful and work toward continuous improvement of practice in the NYS evaluation process using the NYS Teaching Standards.

(DRAFT National Board Standard 4: Knowledge of Students and Adults; PSEL Standards 6: Professional Capacity of School Personnel and Standard 7: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff)



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Core Prop 5: Instruction (pgs.205-238)

Topic 5: Targeting, Facilitating, and Monitoring Professional Learning: *Accomplished Educational leaders drive, facilitate, and monitor the teaching and learning process.*

Participants will dive deeply into the 5 Core Propositions and then assess their school community to develop an action plan for school wide professional learning and link the learning back to the leadership standards for teaching and learning. (DRAFT National Board Standard 3: Teaching and Learning; PSEL Standards 4: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment and Standard 5: Community of Care and Support for Students)

Core Prop 6: Culture (pgs. 239-252)

Topic 6: Developing Equity and Cultural Responsiveness: *Accomplished educational leaders act with a sense of urgency to foster a cohesive culture of learning.*

Educational leaders will examine their core beliefs, policies and practices amongst critical friends in an effort to deconstruct their schema. Leaders will then consider the challenges and barriers a leader must address around the issues of race, equity and a students opportunity to learn. Leaders will then develop strategies to mitigate the issues of racial disproportionality in our schools. (DRAFT National Board Standard 5: Culture; PSEL Standard 3: Equity and Cultural Responsiveness)

Core Prop 7: Ethics (pgs. 253-271)

Topic 7: Professionalism and Ethics: *Accomplished educational leaders model professional, ethical behavior and expect it from others.*

Educational leaders will explore some of the common areas of ethical and professional challenges that they face in their schools and classrooms on a daily basis. Leaders will formulate strategies to successfully navigate these challenges while providing support to staff, students and parents.

(DRAFT National Board Standard 8: Ethics; PSEL Standard 2: Ethics and Professional Norms)

Core Prop 8: Equity (pgs.272-314)

Topic 8: Applying Equity and Cultural Responsiveness: *Accomplished educational leaders ensure equitable learning opportunities and high expectations for all.*

Educational leaders will explore the essential components of a culturally responsive classroom by developing a common understanding of the basic elements. Leaders will then consider the challenges a teacher needs to overcome to successfully integrate culturally relative practices. Leaders will develop strategies for teachers to foster a culturally responsive classroom. (DRAFT National Board Standard 5: Culture; PSEL Standard 3: Equity and Cultural Responsiveness)

Core Prop 9: Advocacy (pgs. 315-480)

Topic 9: Mobilizing the Community: *Accomplished educational leaders advocate on behalf of their schools, communities and profession.*

Leaders will effectively advocate internally and externally to advance the organization's vision and mission. Leaders will strategically seek, inform and mobilize influential educational, political and community leaders to advocate for all students and adults in the learning community through the use of educational case studies. Results from the collaborative study will be used to design an action plan for advocacy in leaders districts.

(DRAFT National Board Standard 7: Advocacy; PSEL Standard 8: Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: NB ACCOMPLISHED PRINCIPAL STANDARDS (pgs. 482); PSEL (pgs. 536)

Frameworks created by:

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Action-Based Conversations: A Facilitator' Guide

THE ACCOMPLISHED LEADER SERIES

LAUNCH LESSON: Developing Norms, Exploring Standards, Identifying a Problem of Practice

Brief Description: Participants will learn how norms govern how group members work and interact with each other. They will learn to lead a team in establishing and maintaining norms. Participants will engage with the DRAFT National Board Administrator standards to discuss the impact on leadership practice.

Participants will identify a Problem of Practice, drawing on their own professional experience. Participants will use mentor texts to craft a Problem of Practice Statement that describes an issue and includes focus questions.

“Leadership is complex. Teaching and learning take place in the context of complex interdependent human organizations, requiring a leader who possesses deep knowledge of education and sophisticated relationship skills. Accomplished principals balance this Complexity.”

-*Accomplished Leader* Standards, pg. 13*
*Term “leader substituted for “Principal”

Protocols Included: [Norms Construction](#); [Save the Last Word](#); [4 As](#)

Outcome-based objectives and assessments:

<i>Objectives</i>
Develop norms with a group with reflection on the process as a participant
Reading and connecting to the Accomplished Leader Standards to Professional Standards for Educational Leaders
Crosswalking the Accomplished Leader Standards to Professional Standards for Educational Leaders
Examine the qualities of a “rich” problem of practice and considerations for identifying a problem of practice.
Identify a Problem of Practice

Length/Timing: all day workshop (6 hours)

Materials or Special Set-up Required:

- [ABC Placemat for reflection and thought capture](#)
- PPT for ATS Launch
- [Standards Study Table Tents](#) and activity
- Read [Norms Put the Golden Rule into Practice for Groups](#) by Joan Richardson, *Tools for Schools, National Staff Development Council, August/September 1999.*



Accomplished Leadership Series

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reflective Journal Questions on Developing Group Norms ● Reflection and Growth Standards ● Crosswalk Placemat ● Read and annotate "Identifying a 'Problem of Practice'" ● Paper for reflections and statement of Problem of Practice
<p><i>Materials:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● post its, pens/pencils, highlighters, chart paper, display board, tape, Standards tents, 5x7 cards for name tents ● Nt3 Norms (highlight reflects group additions)

Process:	Notes
Entry activity; Standards Study Table Tents	Tents on the table
Select a quote you saw an example of in your building or own practice this past week. Select a quote that describes an area of personal growth for you to target this year.	10 min
NORM SETTING	
Indicate to the group that effective groups generally have a set of norms that govern individual behavior, facilitate the work of the group, and enable the group to accomplish its task.	~5 min
Turn & Talk <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What are some examples of your norms? By what process were they established? How often are they revisited and revised? Provide examples of norms by posting the list of norms.	~5 min
Recommend to the group that it establish a set of norms AND revisit them regularly to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ensure that all individuals have the opportunity to contribute in the meeting; ● increase productivity and effectiveness; and ● facilitate the achievement of its goals. 	~5 min
Here is ONE way to establish norms among members of a group: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Give 5 post-its to each person. Ask each person to reflect on and record behaviors they consider ideal behaviors they consider ideal behaviors for a group. Ask them to write an idea on each of the post-its. 	~5 min
Each person will post their post-its on a chart. As they post their ideas, they should begin to group ideas/behaviors that are similar together. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss commonalities within the group. Discuss any opposing behaviors that have been presented in the group: How can the group honor the needs of the individuals with the opposing behaviors? Look at the list of commonalities. What norms could we write that will promote these ideal behaviors? 	~15 min



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<p>f. Review the proposed norms with the group. Determine whether the group can support the norms before the group adopts them.</p> <p>This can be done whole group or smaller groups. Have one member chart the commonalities (if you have several smaller groups sharing out) Have a member write the new norms onto chart paper.</p>	
<p>Discuss how the group will hold itself accountable for maintaining the norms: WHO will do WHAT if these norms are violated? (It is not solely the responsibility of the facilitator.) Role play some breaches of norms to give participants practice in what they will say/do.</p>	~10 min
<p>Reflect on the process Developing Group Norms Reflective Journaling</p>	~5 min
<p>Revisiting and Revising Norms: Collect and share ideas for revisiting and revising norms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post publicly on the wall • Build time into the end of every meeting to check in on them • Have members select one norm for focus during each meeting • Make Norms Checker one of the team meeting roles • Put Norms Revisit on calendar monthly or quarterly <p>Relate how setting group norms ties in to good classroom practice</p>	~10 min
DIVING IN THE STANDARDS	
<p>Reflection Clip & Discussion</p> <p>Which quote resonates most with you. Turn and discuss.</p> <p>Clip Link: https://youtu.be/0glFJMYv1JY</p>	~5 min
<p>Dive into the Accomplished Leader Standards</p> <p>Read Reflection standards (Standard 9) quietly: Save the Last Word Protocol</p> <p>Each participant selects and highlights a statement in their standards that resonates with them. More than one can be selected but they should be prioritized as they will select one to share/discuss.</p>	~10 min (read)
<p>Groups of 5: 6 minutes per round - Time will vary based on group size</p>	~30 min
<p>Whole Group Discussion</p> <p>Where does practice as a reflective leader intersects with your commitment to organizational priorities and student learning?</p>	~10 min
BREAK ~ 15 min	
<p>How does this relate to the standards on which you will be evaluated?</p> <p>Crosswalk Placemat</p> <p>Have bags with the PSEL standards, table tent quotes cut apart. Have table groups discuss and cluster</p> <p>Group share out and discuss. How is the language from the draft standards relevant to the PSEL? What does it add? What is it missing?</p>	~45 min
<p>Discuss, This makes sense to me because....</p> <p>How might these be evidenced in my practice?</p>	~15 min



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IN TABLE GROUPS: Select a standard and create a poster with suggested evidence	~15 min
LUNCH	
Allow participants some time to read and annotate the article, " Identifying a 'Problem of Practice.' " using the 4 As Protocol	~10 min
Small group Discussion: Agree, Assume, Argue, Aspire	~20 min
Participants will Turn and Talk: In pairs, participants will discuss an issue or problem from their own professional experiences.	~10 min
Using the Placemat: Participants will craft Problem of Practice Statements that include a description of the issue as well as 2 or more focus questions. <i>Facilitators will circulate to listen in on some of the turn and talk discussions.</i>	~30 min
Peer Review of statements, feedback and discussion	~20 min
Participants will use feedback and the qualities of a "rich Problem of Practice" and the "general considerations" from the article to examine and/or refine their Problem of Practice Statements.	~15 min
BREAK	
Bringing it all together: Small group Discussion: Now, will your reflective practice intersect with your problem of practice? What might be some challenges you will face?	~15 min
Whole group share out: our next conversation will begin unpacking some of those challenges	~10 min
Whip around: What is the one thing that surprised you in today's conversation?	~10 min
Reflection: How might you utilize the standards to improve your leadership practice?	

Source:

Adapted from August/September 1999 *Tools for Schools*. Oxford, Ohio: National Staff Development Council, 1999. Explain the connection between this reference and the learning resource. Minor modifications have been made from the activity as set forth in the August/September 1999 *Tools for Schools*. Oxford, Ohio: National Staff Development Council, 1999.

School Reform Initiative Protocols: *Norms Construction*, accessible from http://schoolreforminitiative.org/doc/norms_construction.pdf

Original Activities designed by: Sharon Leach, NBCT; Rita Floess, NBCT; and Colleen McDonald, NBCT
Revised by Colleen McDonald, NBCT for the DRAFT Leadership Standards



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Elevating the Profession through Leadership: A New Professional Learning Series

LOCATION: DATE

NATIONAL BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS National Board Core Propositions for Accomplished Educational Leaders™ NT3

1

Table Tent Quotes

Review the quotes around the room and find one that:

- Is an example of something you saw in your first two weeks, or
- An area you would like to identify for personal growth this year



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2

Purpose: This series is designed for building leaders. This professional learning opportunity will provide rich, deep, collaborative conversations to allow the personal and professional exploration of accomplished practice in leadership.

Essential Questions:

- What does accomplished leadership look like and sound like, in your context, with your population?
- How is equity ensured?
- How is student and adult learning managed and monitored?
- How are collaborative partnerships built with families, stakeholders, and communities?



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Day 1 Agenda:

- Introduction of Facilitator
- Establishing Group Norms
- Dive into the Standards-
 - Becoming a Reflective Leader
- Exploring the Standards
- Identifying a Problem of Practice
- Tying it Together



4

Today's Quote

“Leadership is complex. Teaching and learning take place in the context of complex interdependent human organizations, requiring a leader who possesses deep knowledge of education and sophisticated relationship skills. Accomplished leaders balance this complexity.”

-Accomplished Leader Standards, pg. 13
Term "leader substituted for "Principal"



5

Foundational Documents

The Architecture of Accomplished Educational Leadership

The Architecture of Accomplished Educational Leadership (AEL) defines the essential leadership practices of an accomplished educational leader's practice. The framework is presented with applications and implications related to the implementation and application through stages in an integrated process.

1. The Learning Community & the Learning Culture
2. The Learning Community & the Learning Culture
3. The Learning Community & the Learning Culture
4. The Learning Community & the Learning Culture
5. The Learning Community & the Learning Culture
6. The Learning Community & the Learning Culture
7. The Learning Community & the Learning Culture
8. The Learning Community & the Learning Culture

Accomplished Principal Standards Statements

Standard I: Leadership for Results
Accomplished principals lead with a sense of urgency and achieve the highest results for all students and staff. They set organizational priorities by developing learning objectives. They ensure, by providing, people and resources, organization, and vision and create positive change that advances teacher practice and improves student learning.

Standard II: Vision and Mission
Accomplished principals lead and create a vision of the highest level of achievement and add meaningful practice. They engage others in the vision through collaborative processes that focus and drive the organization toward the vision.

Standard III: Learning and Learning
Accomplished principals focus on learning and learning on the primary focus of a system, school, and individual practice. They work collaboratively to implement a system, school, and individual practice. They work collaboratively to implement a system, school, and individual practice. They work collaboratively to implement a system, school, and individual practice. They work collaboratively to implement a system, school, and individual practice.

Standard IV: Knowledge of Students and Adults
Accomplished principals know their students and staff in the learning community. They know their students, including learning, and their staff, including their strengths, needs, and interests, and understand how to use this information to support student learning.



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Accomplished Leadership-Body of Knowledge

The Accomplished Leadership Body of Knowledge is comprised of the Core Propositions*, the DRAFT National Board Standards, the PSEL standards, and the SBL Competencies. Developed and revised by practicing educators based on research and practitioner expertise, the body of knowledge describes what accomplished leader should know and be able to do to have a positive impact on their school culture and student learning.



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Quiet Read

Norms Put the Golden Rule Into Practice

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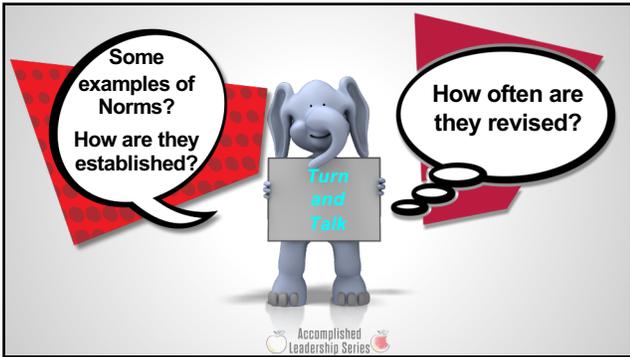
Developing Our Norms



On 5 post-its: reflect and record behaviors you consider ideal for the group's function

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9



10



11



12

Norms:

- **Equity:** Mind your own airtime. Speak up or scale back as needed.
- **Respect:** Assume the best of intentions. Seek to understand. Then strive to be understood.
- **Community:** Be vulnerable and authentic. Take risks. Trust that the wisdom is in the room.
- **Growth:** Be solutions oriented. Own your own learning. Challenge each other. Provide processing time for this complex work.
- **Results:** Stay grounded in the task. Maintain focus with high engagement and low technology. Take necessary moments outside the room. Maintain a parking lot, and always identify next steps.
- **Bring levity!**



13

 A graphic of a spiral-bound notebook with a blue cover and white lined pages. The text 'The Power of Reflection' is written in bold black font across the center of the notebook.

The Power of Reflection



14



15

Exploring the



Language of the Standards

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Breakout Rooms: Save the Last Word:

Volunteer identifies and reads aloud to the group their chosen statement.

They say nothing else at this time.

Each group member has 1 minute to respond to the passage.

The volunteer then has 2 minutes to share why they chose that part and respond to--or build on-- what they heard from the group



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17



Discussion

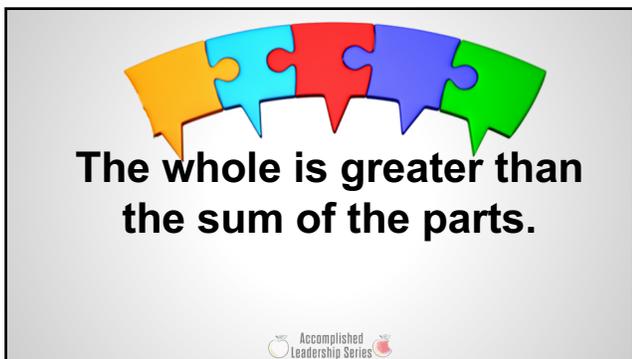
Where does practice as a reflective leader intersect with student learning?

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18



19



20



21

This makes sense to me because....

How might it be evidenced in my practice?



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In table groups select a PSEL standard and Core prop, create a poster with suggested evidence



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LUNCH

See you in 45 minutes.

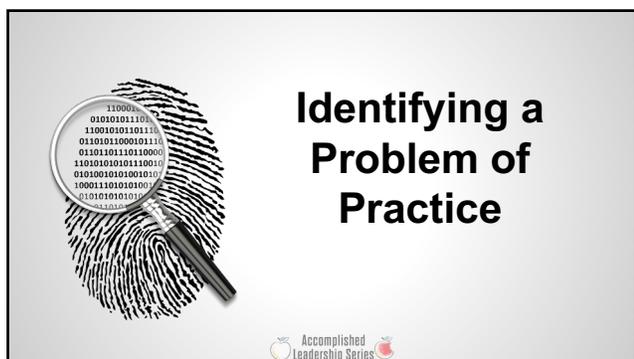


Accomplished Leadership Series

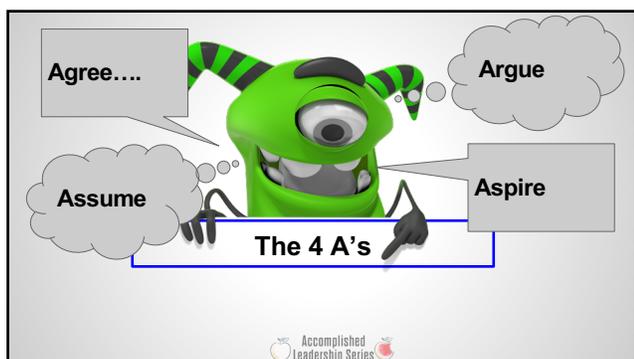
24



25



26



27



TURN AND TALK

Discuss an issue or problem of practice recently encountered based on knowledge of students.



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Crafting a Problem Statement

Step 1

- Description of the issue, and
- 2 focus questions



Step 2

Use qualities of a "rich Problem of Practice" and the general considerations from the article to refine.



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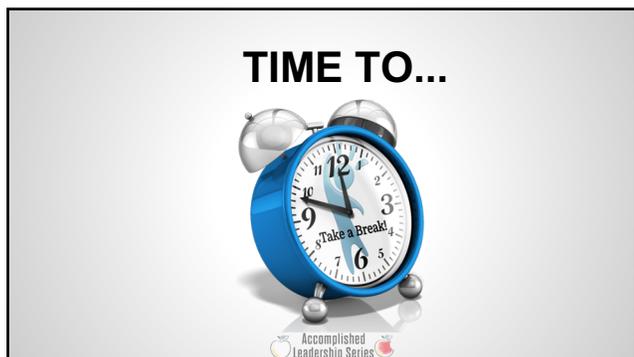
Sharing



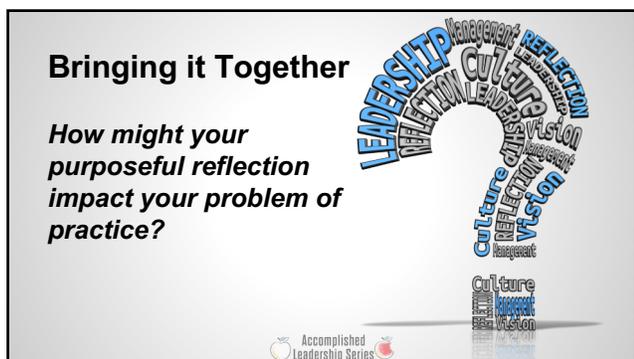
and Revising



30



31



32



33

What is the one thing that surprised you in today's conversation?

How might you utilize the standards to improve your leadership practice?



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Survey

Let us know what you think.



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FUTURE DATES:



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Facilitators:

Name

Email



Resources:

www.accomplishedteachingny.org

nbpts.org



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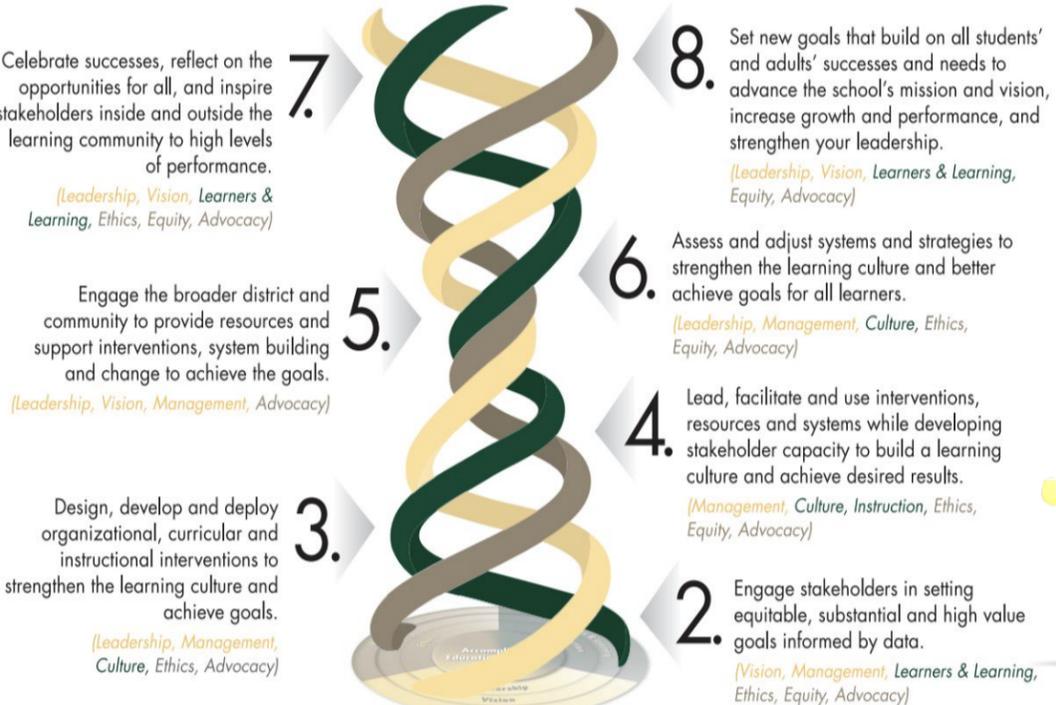


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The Architecture of Accomplished Educational Leading

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The Architecture of Accomplished Educational Leading triple helix illustrates the upwardly spiraling process reflective of an accomplished educational leader's practice. The three strands portray the skills, applications and dispositions as defined in the core propositions and applied through eight stages in an integrated process.



- Your Learning Community & Your Leadership**
 - What is the vision/mission? What are your leadership strengths?
 - What are the goals for the learning community? How can you effectively lead your learning community?
 - What is the context of your learning community? How can you and your learning community achieve desired results?
 - Who are your stakeholders? (Leadership, Vision, Management, Culture, Learners & Learning, Ethics, Equity, Advocacy)
 - Where are your stakeholders in relation to the visions/mission?
 - What do they need or you need from them?



National Board Core Propositions for Accomplished Educational Leaders™

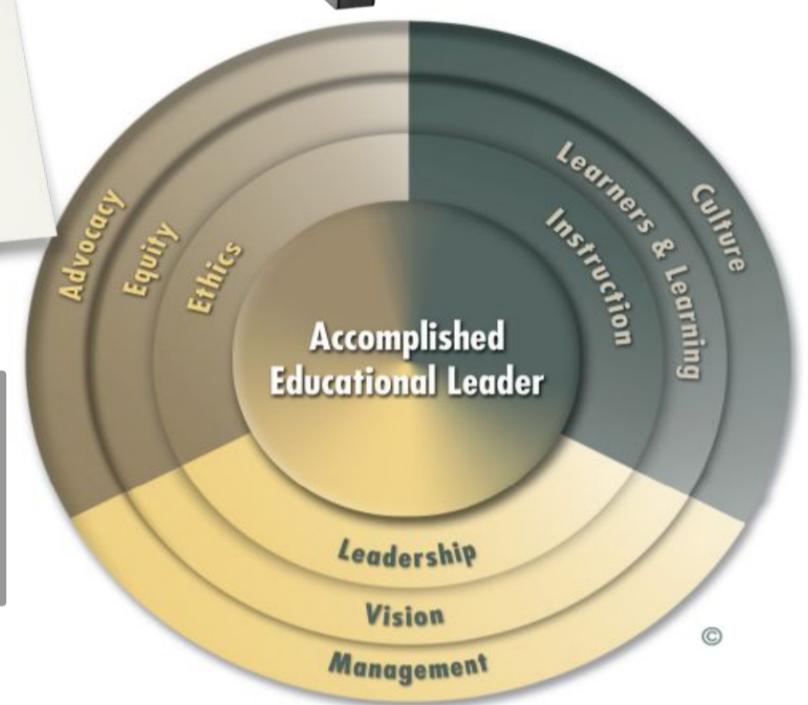
- Accomplished educational leaders continuously cultivate their understanding of leadership and the change process to meet high levels of performance. **(Leadership)**
- Accomplished educational leaders have a clear vision and inspire and engage stakeholders in developing and realizing the mission. **(Vision)**
- Accomplished educational leaders manage and leverage systems and processes to achieve desired results. **(Management)**

Applications

- Accomplished educational leaders are committed to student and adult learners and to their development. **(Learners & Learning)**
- Accomplished educational leaders drive, facilitate, and monitor the teaching and learning process. **(Instruction)**
- Accomplished educational leaders act with a sense of urgency to foster a cohesive culture of learning. **(Culture)**

Dispositions

- Accomplished educational leaders model professional, ethical behavior and expect it from others. **(Ethics)**
- Accomplished educational leaders ensure equitable learning opportunities and high expectations for all. **(Equity)**
- Accomplished educational leaders advocate on behalf of their schools, communities, and profession. **(Advocacy)**



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I notice: _____



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STANDARDS TABLE TENT ACTIVITY

The quotes on the table tents are pulled from the National Board Draft Principal Standards. The quotes were adapted (replacing principals with “leaders”) to make them more universal to school building level leaders.

All 7 of the table tents each have 6 different quotes, totalling 42 quotes. The colored text is meant to help separate each quote.

The draft Standards are some of the richest examples and guidance of accomplished leadership. These table tents were created as a way to highlight the compelling, personal nature of the draft Standards through an easy activity that can lead to further exploration of the standards.

- As an introduction activity or return to working after a transition, ask participants to silently choose a quote with which they connect. Ask participants to share the quote with a partner, table, or whole group and why they connect with it.
- Prompting could be more specific:
 - *Select a quote that you saw an example of today in your building*
 - *Select a quote that describes an area of personal growth for you this year.*

A natural next step after reading these particular quotes would be to utilize the Standards Study. Each building leader can then read a particular standard around the relevant topic.

- Building leaders could be asked to pull a sentence from the draft Standard that is something they think they are doing well - what evidence can they give that they do it well? How do they know they are impacting teachers and students?
- Building leaders could be asked to pull a sentence from their draft Standard that is something they want to get better at - how will they improve? What support do they want from others?
- Facilitate a conversation:
 - *What did you read that surprised you?*
 - *What did you like that you read?*
 - *What felt very specific to your work?*
 - *What did you notice that made you curious?*

Accomplished leaders consistently advance teaching and learning as the core business of the organization.

Accomplished leaders adapt their paradigm and practice to result in improved student performance and enhanced teacher instruction through reflective practice.

Accomplished leaders are confident and tenacious in their pursuit of high standards, yet they bring a generous dose of humility to their role by making their own practice and continuous learning public, modeling the same professional growth expected of teachers and staff.

Accomplished leaders ensure that every student is connected consistently in meaningful ways with at least one caring adult advocate and that every adult is connected in meaningful ways to other adults.

Accomplished leaders collaboratively lead the development of management structures that engender ownership, commitment, and transparency.

Accomplished leaders systematically and strategically promote the well-being of the organization.

and encouragement.

exercise compassion when difficult circumstances warrant support

While believing in accountability for all, accomplished leaders

students.

community and intervene when practices may marginalize

Accomplished leaders recognize potential bias in the learning

in the pursuit of established learning goals.

and informal dialogue, building a sense of urgency and ownership

Accomplished leaders actively engage all stakeholders in formal

Accomplished leaders respect the cultural differences in a global society and make diversity a means for enriching the culture of the learning community.

Accomplished leaders work collaboratively to identify solutions, define roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders, and establish expectations for performance and improvement.

Accomplished leaders consistently articulate the collective vision and promote an attainable mission to advance teaching and learning, resulting in increased student performance.

All communications from these accomplished leaders are intentional, clear, consistent, and focused on results.

Accomplished leaders realize that a variety of parental, social, community, religious, political, and educational audiences have an interest in and are affected by the learning community.

Accomplished leaders subscribe to, model, and hold themselves and all students and adults in the learning community accountable to a high level of personal and professional ethics.

Accomplished leaders ensure that every adult feels like an integral part of the learning community and understands how his or her learning is important to them personally and to others.

Accomplished leaders model, coach, and mentor in order to support others to grow in their practice.

Accomplished leaders plan in collaboration with their teams for high performance by diagnosing needs, designing solutions, prescribing actions, achieving results, and evaluation effectiveness.

may be disengaged.

Accomplished leaders reach out and make sure that opportunities exist for all students to feel that they belong, especially those who

learning, why not, and what are we going to do about it?"

the questions, "Who is learning and why?" and "Who is not

To maintain high standards, accomplished leaders continually ask

responsibilities in the creation and pursuit of the vision and mission.

These visionary leaders inspire others to embrace their roles and

Accomplished leaders build systems that incorporate qualitative and quantitative data to monitor and assess the culture...using data to initiate critical discussions aimed at enhancing adult practices and student behaviors that are necessary for a trusting, effective culture.

When weighing the pros and cons of a difficult decision, accomplished leaders choose the right decision rather than the convenient one.

Accomplished leaders are risk-takers who make their own learning journey public, placing their practice-and the continuous revision of their practice-in view of teachers, staff, parents, and students as a model of commitment to perpetual learning.

Accomplished leaders lead the identification, orchestration, and monitoring of all aspects of operations, from instruction to the use of human and financial capital, to the physical plant and the legal aspects and administration of policies and procedures.

efficacy.

Accomplished leaders reinforce high expectations for adults, so adults will have high aspirations for themselves and a personal sense of

Accomplished leaders work with staff, students, and parents to establish a framework of ethical norms, beliefs, and values to govern behavior inside and outside the learning community.

Accomplished leaders realize that the strength of an organization lies in its human capital.

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Accomplished leaders are committed to creating a collaborative learning community, and they communicate high expectations for civic responsibility and commitment to the common good.

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Accomplished leaders collaborate with their colleagues, network, study research, and seek experiences to enhance their practice, expand their

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When faced with challenging or controversial decision that is in the best interests of academic achievement, accomplished leaders, explain the context of the situation, provide background, and communicate

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Accomplished leaders courageously navigate the advocacy process to continuously promote the goals of the organization as well as education in the broader sense as an essential element of a thriving democracy.

Accomplished leaders establish a culture in which diverse points of view are encouraged and valued in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the vision and mission.

respect is the cornerstone of the culture.

Accomplished leaders foster a secure environment in which mutual

to the achievement of educational goals.

Accomplished leaders inspire members of the community to contribute

capacity.

By leveraging the power of relationships, including all stakeholders, and appropriately sharing leadership, accomplished leaders promote cohesion, collective effort, and cooperation to elevate organizational

Through a collaborative approach, accomplished leaders make needed adjustments and communicate them effectively, keeping the systems on track and aligned to organizational objectives.

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Accomplished leaders structure time and resources to support teachers to work collaboratively in examining student work, in holding professional conversations, and in adjusting their teaching practices accordingly.



- 3-4** Developing norms
- 5-6** Norms of the NSDC board and staff
- 7** Resources
- 8** Ask Dr. Developer

Norms put the ‘Golden Rule’ into practice for groups

By Joan Richardson

Lillian always arrives late and thinks nothing of chatting with her seatmate while someone else is trying to make a point. Arthur routinely reads a newspaper during each meeting. Barbara can't wait until each meeting ends so she can head to the parking lot to tell someone what she could have said during the meeting.

Later, most of them grumble that “these meetings are just a waste of my time. We never get anything accomplished.”

Having a set of norms—or ground rules—that a group follows encourages behaviors that will help a group do its work and discourages behaviors that interfere with a group's effectiveness.

Think of norms as “a behavior contract,” said Kathryn Blumsack, an educational consultant from Maryland who specializes in team development.

Norms are the unwritten rules for how we act and what we do. They are the rules that govern how we interact with each other, how we conduct business, how we make decisions, how we communicate, even how we dress when we get together. “Norms are part of the culture. They exist whether or not you acknowledge them. They exist whether or not you formalize them,” Blumsack said.

Pat Roy, director of the Delaware Professional Development Center, said identifying a set of norms is an effective way to democratize a group. Writing norms helps create groups that are able to have

honest discussions that enable everyone to participate and be heard, she said.

WHO NEEDS NORMS?

Any group that meets regularly or that is trying to “do business” needs to identify its existing norms or develop new norms. In school districts, that would include department groups, grade level teams, interdisciplinary teams, content area teams, school improvement teams, action teams, curriculum committees, leadership teams, advisory committees, and special project groups.

Although a group can pause and set norms at any time, Blumsack and Roy agree that it's ideal to set norms at the beginning of a group's work together.

“If you don't set norms at the beginning, when the behaviors become ineffective you have a harder time pulling behavior back to where it should be,” Roy said.

Because every group has unspoken norms for behavior, groups need to work at being explicit about what they expect from each other. “Get those assumptions out on the table,” Blumsack said.

CREATING NORMS

Some groups would prefer to have a set of norms handed to them. But Roy and Blumsack both said groups will feel more ownership of the norms

Continued on Page 2

Norms put 'Golden Rule' into practice

Continued from Page One

if they identify and write their own.

"If they don't do this, 10 minutes after you've handed them a list, they'll begin violating the norms because they aren't their norms," Roy said.

There are two distinct ways to write norms. The first is by observing and writing down the norms that already are in use.

That's how the NSDC Board of Trustees established the set of norms it has used for about eight years. The NSDC board meets for two days twice a year, each time with a lengthy agenda of material that must be addressed.

The norms (which are published on Page 5) grew out of a board discussion about how it operated and how it wanted to operate. Pat Roy, who was then a board member, was tapped to observe the board's implicit norms during one meeting and draft a set of norms. "Essentially, I wrote down what I saw in operation," Roy said.

Roy's first draft was edited and refined by staff and other board members. That set of initial norms has been largely unchanged over the years.

The second way is to have group members suggest ideal behaviors for groups, eventually refining those suggested behaviors into a set of norms. (See the tool on Page 3.)

Blumsack cautions that norms must fit the group. Not every group would feel comfortable with the same set of rules, which is why each group must create its own rules, she said.

For example, she recently worked with a group that was "very chatty, very extroverted." Initially, the group wanted a norm that banned side conversations. Two days into their work, the group was frustrated because Blumsack, as the facilitator, kept trying to enforce the norm against side conversations. Finally, the group agreed to

modify the norm to fit its unique personality. Their new norm was: "If you need to make a comment, do so but return quickly to the main conversation."

PUBLICIZING THE NORMS

Simply writing norms does not guarantee that the group will remember and respect them. Groups need to continually remind themselves about the norms they've identified.

At a minimum, the norms should be posted in the group's meeting room, Roy said. "Post them and celebrate them," she said.

Blumsack recommends creating tented name cards for each group member. On the side facing out, write the group member's name; on the side facing the member, print the group's norms.

The NSDC board receives a list of its norms along with materials for each of its twice-a-year board meetings. Then, at the beginning of each meeting, the president reintroduces the norms to acquaint board members with them. Since new board members join each year, this also helps to acculturate newcomers with the board's expectations.

Sometimes, the board uses activities to aid in that. During one meeting, for example, each board member was asked to illustrate one norm and the others tried to identify the norms based on those illustrations. Those illustrations were then taped to the meeting room's walls as visual reminders to be vigilant about the norms. Another time, board members were asked to write down as many board norms as they could recall from memory.

ENFORCING THE NORMS

Perhaps the toughest part of living with norms is having the norms enforced.

"The reality is that every group will violate every norm at one time or another. So you have to talk about violations and

how you'll deal with them," Roy said.

Blumsack agrees. "If you don't call attention to the fact that a norm has been violated, in effect you're creating a second set of norms. For example, a common norm is expecting everyone to be on time. If you don't point out when someone violates that norm, then, in effect, you're saying that it's really not important to be on time," Blumsack said.

After a group identifies its norms, they suggest asking how they would like to be notified that they have violated a norm.

Roy recommends finding light, humorous ways to point out violations. One group she worked with kept a basket of foam rubber balls in the middle of the table. Violation of a norm meant being pelted with foam rubber balls. Other groups have used small colored cards, flags, or hankies that could be waved when a violation was noted.

Having all group members take responsibility for enforcing the norm is key, Blumsack said. Enforcing the norms should not be just the job of the group's leader.

EVALUATING THE NORMS

Finally, each group needs to periodically evaluate its adherence to the norms. A group that meets once or twice a year might evaluate each time they meet; a group that meets weekly might evaluate once a month or so.

Blumsack recommends giving each group member an opportunity to speak about what he or she has observed or take each statement and ask group members "how well did we do on this norm?"

Each member should be encouraged to identify the group's areas of strength as well as its areas of weakness, but not to single out violators.

"The more 'up front' you are about how the group is doing, the easier it will be to communicate about the other issues you're dealing with," Blumsack said.

Developing norms

COMMENTS TO THE FACILITATOR: This activity will enable a group to develop a set of operating norms or ground rules. In existing groups, anonymity will help ensure that everyone is able to express their ideas freely. That is the reason for suggesting that the facilitator provide pens or pencils and ask that everyone use the same type of writing implement.

SUPPLIES: Index cards, pens/pencils, poster paper, display board, tape, tacks.

TIME: Two hours.

Directions

1. Indicate to the group that effective groups generally have a set of norms that governs individual behavior, facilitates the work of the group, and enables the group to accomplish its task.
2. Provide examples of norms by posting the list of norms that appears on Page 5 of this issue of *Tools for Schools*.
3. Recommend to the group that it establish a set of norms:
 - To ensure that all individuals have the opportunity to contribute in the meeting;
 - To increase productivity and effectiveness; and
 - To facilitate the achievement of its goals.
4. Give five index cards and the same kind of writing tool to each person in the group.
5. Ask each person to reflect on and record behaviors they consider ideal behaviors for a group. Ask them to write one idea on each of their cards. Time: 10 minutes.
6. The facilitator should shuffle all the cards together. Every effort should be made to provide anonymity for individuals, especially if the group has worked together before.
7. Turn cards face up and read each card aloud. Allow time for the group members to discuss each idea. Tape or tack each card to a display board so that all group members can see it. As each subsequent card is read aloud, ask the group to determine if it is similar to another idea that already has been expressed. Cards with similar ideas should be grouped together.
8. When all of the cards have been sorted into groups, ask the group to write the norm suggested by that group of cards. Have one group member record these new norms onto a large sheet of paper.
9. Review the proposed norms with the group. Determine whether the group can support the norms before the group adopts them.

Writing norms helps

create groups that are

able to have honest

discussions that enable

everyone to participate

and be heard.

*Source: Adapted from **Tools for change workshops** by Robby Champion. Oxford, Ohio: National Staff Development Council, 1993.*

Developing norms

WHEN ESTABLISHING NORMS, CONSIDER:	PROPOSED NORM
<p>TIME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When do we meet? • Will we set a beginning and ending time? • Will we start and end on time? 	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>LISTENING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will we encourage listening? • How will we discourage interrupting? 	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>CONFIDENTIALITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the meetings be open? • Will what we say in the meeting be held in confidence? • What can be said after the meeting? 	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>DECISION MAKING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will we make decisions? • Are we an advisory or a decision-making body? • Will we reach decisions by consensus? • How will we deal with conflicts? 	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>PARTICIPATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will we encourage everyone's participation? • Will we have an attendance policy? 	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>EXPECTATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do we expect from members? • Are there requirements for participation? 	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Norms of the NSDC Board of Trustees and Staff

WE WILL WORK TOGETHER as a community that values consensus rather than majority rule.

WE WILL BE FULLY “PRESENT” at the meeting by becoming familiar with materials before we arrive and by being attentive to behaviors which affect physical and mental engagement.

WE WILL INVITE AND WELCOME the contributions of every member and listen to each other.

WE WILL BE INVOLVED to our individual level of comfort. Each of us is responsible for airing disagreements during the meeting rather than carrying those disagreements outside the board meeting.

WE WILL OPERATE in a collegial and friendly atmosphere.

WE WILL USE HUMOR as appropriate to help us work better together.

WE WILL KEEP CONFIDENTIAL our discussions, comments, and deliberations.

WE WILL BE RESPONSIBLE for examining all points of view before a consensus is accepted.

WE WILL BE GUIDED BY the NSDC mission statement which focuses on organization and professional development which enhances success for all students.



Tools For Schools

Norms for meetings

- ▶ Start on time.
- ▶ Develop and review the agenda.
- ▶ Conduct one piece of business at a time.
- ▶ Participation is a right...and a responsibility.
- ▶ Initiate ideas.
- ▶ Support...challenge...counter. Differences resolved constructively lead to creative problem solving.
- ▶ Give others a chance to talk. Silence does not always mean agreement.
- ▶ Communicate authentically; what a person says should reflect what he thinks as well as what he feels.
- ▶ Conduct group business in front of the group.
- ▶ Conduct personal business outside of the meeting.
- ▶ Develop conditions of respect, acceptance, trust, and caring.
- ▶ Develop alternative approaches to the solution of a problem.
- ▶ Test for readiness to make decisions.
- ▶ Make the decision.
- ▶ Assign follow-up actions and responsibilities.
- ▶ Summarize what has been accomplished.
- ▶ End on time.

Source: Building systems for professional growth: An action guide, by the Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands, 1989. Reprinted from Keys to successful meetings by Stephanie Hirsh, Ann Delehant, and Sherry Sparks. Oxford, Ohio: National Staff Development Council, 1994.

Norms within which we agree to work

WE WILL:

- ▶ Expect a leadership team member to make a commitment for one year.
- ▶ Meet only when there is a meaningful agenda.
- ▶ Start and end on time.
- ▶ Dress comfortably.
- ▶ Have refreshments.
- ▶ Have a different facilitator and recorder for each meeting.
- ▶ Keep meetings open.
- ▶ Differentiate between brainstorming and discussion.
- ▶ Only address schoolwide issues.
- ▶ Express disagreement with ideas, not individuals.
- ▶ Feel responsible to express differing opinions within the meeting.
- ▶ Maintain confidentiality regarding disagreements expressed during the meeting.
- ▶ Reach decisions by consensus.

Source: Hamilton Park Pacesetter School, Richardson Independent School District, Dallas, Texas.



Learning about developing norms

- **How to Make Meetings Work** by Michael Doyle and David Straus. New York: Jove Books, 1982. Describes how to stop wasting time and make meetings more effective. ISBN 0-515-09048-4. Check your local bookstore or library for a copy.
- **Joining Together: Group Theory and Skills** (6th edition) by David Johnson and Frank Johnson. Needham, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1996. Explores trust, leadership, and group development theory, including development of norms and why they are needed. Provides activities and simulations. ISBN 0-2205-19750-7. Check your local bookstore or library for a copy.
- **Keys to Successful Meetings** by Stephanie Hirsh, Ann Delehant, and Sherry Sparks. Oxford, Ohio: NSDC, 1994. A manual that provides the knowledge, skills, and processes necessary to conduct team meetings. Includes more than 70 guide sheets for immediate reproduction and use in

meetings. NSDC stock # B39. Price: \$80, non-members; \$64, members. To order, phone (513) 523-6029 or visit the NSDC Web site at www.nsd.org.

- **Skilled Facilitator** by Roger Schwarz. San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass, 1994. Practical guide for leading groups effectively, including many suggestions about developing norms. ISBN 1-55542-638-7. Price: \$30.95. To order, phone (415) 433-1740.
- **Team Building Toolkit** by Deborah Harrington-Mackin. New York: American Management Assn., 1994. Spells out guidelines for turning a diverse group of employees into an effective team. Offers helpful lists of tips and tactics for team members and group leaders. ISBN 0-8144-7826-3. Price: \$ 17.95. Phone (212) 586-8100.
- **Tools for Change Workshops** by Robby Champion. Oxford, Ohio: National Staff Development Council, 1993. Eighteen workshop modules help

groups learn more about the four phases of organizational change. Includes ready-to-use structured exercises, case studies, instruments, transparencies, and handouts. Includes discussion about development of norms. NSDC stock # B27. Price: \$150, non-members; \$120, members. To order, phone (513) 523-6029 or visit the NSDC Web site at www.nsd.org.



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Ask Dr. Developer



Dr. Developer has all the answers to questions that staff developers ask. (At least he thinks he does!)

A simple test can be revealing

Q *I think spending hours to develop norms is a waste of time. Everyone attending these meetings is an adult. Adults know how to behave and participate in meetings. We just want to get to work when we get into one of these meetings. We don't want to sit around and talk about how we're going to do that work.*

A I wonder if everyone attending these meetings agrees that everyone knows how to behave. Whenever I've asked groups if they need to develop norms, I usually hear from at least two or three persons who like the idea. I've discovered that these individuals often haven't been able to fully participate in meetings. Often, they believe that one or two individuals dominate the discussion, resulting in decisions that they can't support.

Answering these questions may help you decide whether your group needs to spend time developing norms:

- Does every member join in your group's discussions?
- Does each member listen as the others speak?

- Does any single member dominate the discussions?
- Do all members arrive on time and stay for the entire meeting?
- Is everyone prepared to do their work when they arrive?
- Does each member of the group believe his or her time at the meeting has been well spent?

One way to test whether everyone agrees on the norms that guide your meetings is to ask the members of your group. Distribute index cards and, on each card, ask each member to write one norm that they believe governs the group's behavior. Post those responses so that all members can see the responses.

If you find that the group identifies the same norms and wants to continue those norms, then you merely need to assemble them into a list that can be easily shared with your group.

On the other hand, if your group is not in agreement on the norms, you still have work to do.

Ultimately, all members of the group should have a voice in deciding whether the group needs to spell out norms and then in working to identify what they should be.

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The unexamined life isn't worth living.

Socrates, 450 BC

By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; Second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest.

Confucius

Education is about learning – not only student learning,
but also staff learning.

Learning is a function of reflection.

Reflective practice is as much a state of mind as it is a set
of activities.

Joseph Vaughan

Every teacher needs to improve, not because they are not
good enough, but because they can be even better.

Dylan Wiliam

Rather than reflective practice being seen as impractical, passive, or irrelevant to action, it can be regarded as centrally important and relevant to the understanding of ongoing action.

B. Bright

Expert teachers are more focused on solving problems with respect to individual students' performance in the class, whereas the experienced teachers generally focus their decision on the entire class.

John Hattie

Too rarely do teachers see student feedback as reflecting on their expertise as teachers.

Helen Timperley

Growth goals are a key element to becoming a reflective teacher.

Observing and discussing teaching is an important element to the development of teaching expertise.

Robert Marzano

Education is a constant reorganisation, reconstruction and transformation of experience.

John Dewey

Life is not linear it is organic, we created our lives symbiotically as explore our talents in relation to the circumstances they help to create for us.

Sir Ken Robinson

The unexamined life isn't worth living.

Socrates, 450 BC

Sorting Activity

Copy following pages on 3 different colored papers:

Leadership standards statements (various colored print) on white;

9 Core Statements on blue; and

9 Leadership Standards on green

Cut apart each statement.

Place all pieces in a plastic bag.

Groups will receive a bag and be asked to sort the language of the standards under the headings of the Core statements and Leadership Standards titles.

Accomplished leaders are confident and tenacious in their pursuit of high standards, yet they bring a generous dose of humility to their role by making their own practice and continuous learning public, modeling the same professional growth expected of teachers and staff.

Accomplished leaders adapt their paradigm and practice to result in improved student performance and enhanced teacher instruction through reflective practice.

Accomplished leaders consciously advance teaching and learning as the core business of the organization.

Accomplished leaders ensure that every student is connected consistently in meaningful ways with at least one caring adult advocate and that every adult is connected in meaningful ways to other adults.

Accomplished leaders collaboratively lead the development of management structures that engender ownership, commitment, and transparency.

Accomplished leaders systematically and strategically promote the well-being of the organization.

Accomplished leaders respect the cultural differences in a global society and make diversity a means for enriching the culture of the learning community.

Accomplished leaders work collaboratively to identify solutions, define roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders, and establish expectations for performance and improvement.

Accomplished leaders consistently articulate the collective vision and promote an attainable mission to advance teaching and learning, resulting in increased student performance.

Accomplished leaders actively engage all stakeholders in formal and informal dialogue, building a sense of urgency and ownership in the pursuit of established learning goals.

Accomplished leaders recognize potential bias in the learning community and intervene when practices may marginalize students.

While believing in accountability for all, accomplished leaders exercise compassion when difficult circumstances warrant support and encouragement.

Accomplished leaders subscribe to, model, and hold themselves and all students and adults in the learning community accountable to a high level of personal and professional ethics.

Accomplished leaders realize that a variety of parental, social, community, religious, political, and educational audiences have an interest in and are affected by the learning community.

All communications from these accomplished leaders are intentional, clear, consistent, and focused on results.

Accomplished leaders ensure that every adult feels like an integral part of the learning community and understands how his or her learning is important to them personally and to others.

Accomplished leaders model, coach, and mentor in order to support others to grow in their practice.

Accomplished leaders plan in collaboration with their teams for high performance by diagnosing needs, designing solutions, prescribing actions, achieving results, and evaluation effectiveness.

Accomplished leaders work with staff, students, and parents to establish a framework of ethical norms, beliefs, and values to govern behavior inside and outside the learning community.

Accomplished leaders reinforce high expectations for adults, so adults will have high aspirations for themselves and a personal sense of efficacy.

Accomplished leaders lead the identification, orchestration, and monitoring of all aspects of operations, from instruction to the use of human and financial capital, to the physical plant and the legal aspects and administration of policies and procedures.

Accomplished leaders realize that the strength of an organization lies in its human capital.

Accomplished leaders share responsibility for communicating the vision and mission with members of the learning community and develop the leadership capacity of those members to share the message as well.

Accomplished leaders are committed to creating a collaborative learning community, and they communicate high expectations for civic responsibility and commitment to the common good.

These visionary leaders inspire others to embrace their roles and responsibilities in the creation and pursuit of the vision and mission.

To maintain high standards, accomplished leaders continually ask the questions, “Who is learning and why?” and “Who is not learning, why not, and what are we going to do about it?”

Accomplished leaders reach out and make sure that opportunities exist for all students to feel that they belong, especially those who may be disengaged.

Accomplished leaders build systems that incorporate qualitative and quantitative data to monitor and assess the culture...using data to initiate critical discussions aimed at enhancing adult practices and student behaviors that are necessary for a trusting, effective culture.

When weighing the pros and cons of a difficult decision, accomplished leaders choose the right decision rather than the convenient one.

Accomplished leaders are risk-takers who make their own learning journey public, placing their practice-and the continuous revision of their practice-in view of teachers, staff, parents, and students as a model of commitment to perpetual learning.

Accomplished leaders communicate with and engage all stakeholders in a compelling manner, transforming the environment and attitude from one of compliance to one of shared commitment and shared responsibility.

When faced with challenging or controversial decision that is in the best interests of academic achievement, accomplished leaders, explain the context of the situation, provide background, and communicate transparently.

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Through a collaborative approach, accomplished leaders make needed adjustments and communicate them effectively, keeping the systems on track and aligned to organizational objectives.

Accomplished leaders identify and anticipate obstacles to the achievement of the vision and mission and work to overcome them.

Accomplished leaders structure time and resources to support teachers to work collaboratively in examining student work, in holding professional conversations, and in adjusting their teaching practices accordingly.

Standard 1. Mission, Vision, and Core Values

Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.

Standard 2. Ethics and Professional norms

Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 3. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness

Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 4. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 5. Community of Care and Support for Students

Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.

Standard 6. Professional Capacity of School Personnel

Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 7. Professional Community for Teachers and Staff

Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 8. Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community

Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 9. Operations and Management

Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 10. School Improvement

Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

9 Core Principles

Accomplished educational leaders continuously cultivate their understanding of leadership and the change process to meet high levels of performance.

Accomplished educational leaders have a clear vision and inspire and engage stakeholders in developing and realizing the mission.

Accomplished educational leaders manage and leverage systems and processes to achieve desired results.

Accomplished educational leaders are committed to student and adult learners and to their development.

Accomplished educational leaders drive, facilitate, and monitor the teaching and learning process.

Accomplished educational leaders act with a sense of urgency to foster a cohesive culture of learning.

Accomplished educational leaders model professional, ethical behavior and expect it from others.

Accomplished educational leaders ensure equitable learning opportunities and high expectations for all.

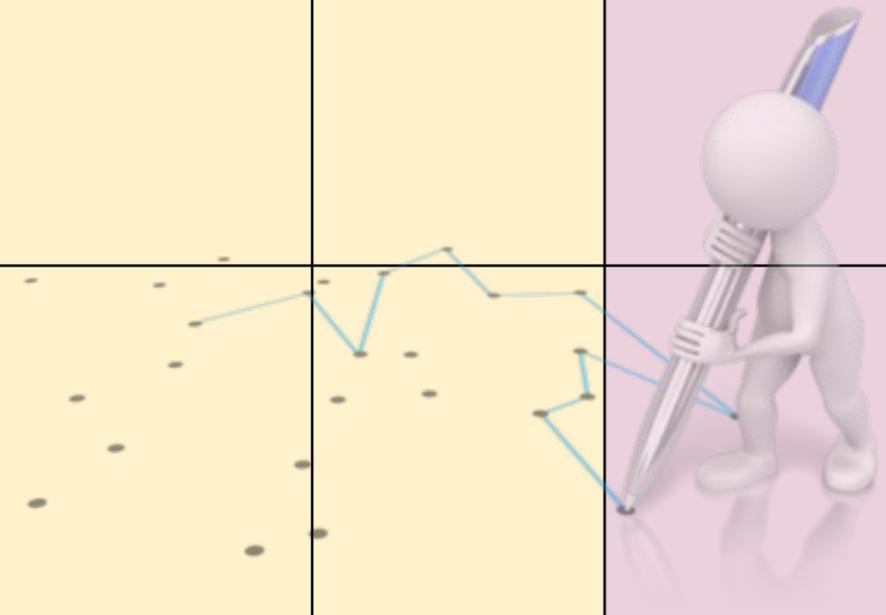
Accomplished educational leaders advocate on behalf of their schools, communities, and profession.

CROSSWALKING PSEL AND NB DRAFT STANDARDS

National Board's DRAFT Standards for Accomplished Leaders ----- PSEL 2015 Standards	STANDARD 1 LEADERSHIP FOR RESULTS	STANDARD 2 VISION AND MISSION	STANDARD 3 TEACHING AND LEARNING	STANDARD 4 KNOWLEDGE OF STUDENTS & ADULTS	STANDARD 5 CULTURE	STANDARD 6 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT	STANDARD 7 ADVOCACY	STANDARD 8 ETHICS	STANDARD 9 REFLECTION AND GROWTH
<p>Standard 1 Mission, Vision, & Core Values Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.</p>									
<p>Standard 2 Ethics and Professional Norms Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being.</p>									
<p>Standard 3 Equity and Cultural Responsiveness Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and well-being.</p>									
<p>Standard 4 Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being.</p>									
<p>Standard 5 Community of Care and Support for Students Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.</p>									

HOW WILL YOU BE EVALUATED?

National Board's DRAFT Standards for Accomplished Leaders ----- PSEL 2015 Standards	STANDARD 1 LEADERSHIP FOR RESULTS	STANDARD 2 VISION AND MISSION	STANDARD 3 TEACHING AND LEARNING	STANDARD 4 KNOWLEDGE OF STUDENTS & ADULTS	STANDARD 5 CULTURE	STANDARD 6 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT	STANDARD 7 ADVOCACY	STANDARD 8 ETHICS	STANDARD 9 REFLECTION AND GROWTH
<p>Standard 6 Professional Capacity of School Personnel Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being.</p>									
<p>Standard 7 Professional Community for Teachers and Staff Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student's academic success and well-being.</p>									
<p>Standard 8 Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial way to promote each student's academic success and well-being.</p>									
<p>Standard 9 Operations Management Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each students academic success and well-being.</p>									
<p>Standard 10 School Improvement Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being.</p>									



Standard IX Reflection and Growth

Accomplished principals are humble lead learners who make their practice public and view their own learning as a foundational part of the work of school leadership. They are reflective practitioners who build on their strengths and identify areas for personal and professional growth. They adapt their paradigm and practice to result in improved student performance and enhanced teacher instruction through reflective practices.

Accomplished principals are above all, lead learners. They are intentional about their own learning and engage publicly in refining their practice and learning from mistakes. They are highly reflective individuals who engage in continuous personal and professional growth. These principals honestly and continually assess their strengths and weaknesses while seeking opportunities to improve. Based on the results of this regular assessment, they establish learning goals for themselves and develop a personal plan to attain their professional aspirations. These principals combine new learning with their professional experience and relevant data to improve their leadership, positively affecting adult practice and student learning. Accomplished principals step out of their comfort zones and take strategic risks. They seek new, different, and challenging experiences that enhance their individual and organizational capacity.

Accomplished principals encourage self-reflection and self-renewal for themselves and others in the learning community through

- humility and continuous personal learning
- personal reflection
- reflective strategies
- a culture of reflection
- rejuvenation and recommitment

Humility and Continuous Personal Learning

Accomplished principals view their own learning as an intentional, central, foundational aspect of the work of school leadership, integrally linked to the growth of the school. They are risk-takers who make their own learning journey public, placing their practice—and

the continuous revision of their practice—in view of teachers, staff, parents and students as a model of commitment to perpetual learning. They are modest and unpretentious rather than all-knowing. Accomplished principals learn side by side with teachers and students in service of school goals and student success.

Personal Reflection

Accomplished principals value self-knowledge and self-understanding. Through personal reflection, they examine their practice through the lens of equity, fairness, and justice. They use this process to determine whether there is a connection between their biases and their behaviors, and modify their behavior to safeguard against their biases.

Accomplished principals are lifelong learners who build on their strengths and identify areas for growth. They assemble a network of support and guidance by enlisting mentors, colleagues, critical friends, and other leaders from inside and outside the field of education. Through involvement in leadership and professional growth opportunities, these principals incorporate new learning into practice. They use the resources of local, state, and national professional organizations to enhance their skills.

Accomplished principals build a diverse leadership team with complementary strengths to balance their leadership. For example, in leading an organization, a principal whose strengths are conceptual would enlist and involve someone who is more detail oriented.

Reflective Strategies

From their investment in reflective practice, accomplished principals accrue benefits not only for themselves but also for the learning community. To improve their professional practice, they willingly invite, accept, and use feedback from others. These principals create systems that seek, value, and use formal and informal feedback from all who are affected by their leadership. For example, such principals may use a 360-degree evaluation approach to determine how others perceive them and then use the results to improve their practice. Accomplished principals also gather and consider data on the current condition of the organization. They equitably consider and respond to this information, linking the effectiveness of their leadership practice with the performance of the organization and making adjustments needed for their own growth and for the advancement of the learning community.

Accomplished principals are relentless in taking advantage of opportunities to reflect and to increase their professional knowledge. These principals remain current on educational research that supports their leadership; they see the interrelatedness of research in all fields to education. For example, they would read extensively on creating and cultivating a vision and mission before and while collaborating with staff in the creation of the vision and mission for the learning community.

Accomplished principals use technology as a powerful learning tool. They may participate in digital networks for communication among professional colleagues, use social networking tools for informal learning, or take part with professional colleagues in online learning communities. These principals use such learning opportunities to consistently reflect on ways to improve their practice of leadership.

Accomplished principals engage in action research as a reflective exercise. For example, in response to staff needs, they may develop a demonstration classroom to test learning strategies for themselves before providing professional learning opportunities for their teachers.

Accomplished principals reflect on current research about student learning and effective teaching practice. They make connections with what is happening in other professional fields as it relates to instructional practice. These principals adapt their leadership as they reflect on the implications embodied in the research. They know that research is useful only when theory is bridged with practice based on a particular context. They use new research to enhance, without derailing, the organization and instructional practices.

A Culture of Reflection

Accomplished principals know that constructive reflection is key to continual improvement of the culture within the learning community. They collaborate with their colleagues, network, study research, and seek experiences to enhance their practice, expand their repertoire, and deepen their knowledge. They develop the ability of staff and teachers to reflect in the moment, in the midst of action, and then to conduct deeper reflection. These principals provide regular opportunities to teachers for self and group reflection to continuously improve teaching practices. For example, they may establish professional learning communities to provide a structure for collegial reflection.

Accomplished principals establish continued growth and reflection as a priority in the learning community. For example, they may see to it that teachers have a growth plan and review it continually throughout the year to inform their practice; cadres of teachers and staff may then discuss shared areas of strengths and weaknesses. These principals model and lead constructive, non-defensive listening and response to critique, so that this essential aspect of reflection is built into the culture of the organization.

Rejuvenation and Recommitment

Because accomplished principals, like most accomplished education professionals, realize the necessity of balancing their personal and professional lives, they intentionally create opportunities to celebrate their journey of growth. For example, they set aside time for family, friends, and recreation. These principals understand the value of rejuvenation and engage in activities that allow them to renew themselves, so that they can be fully present in their work.

STANDARD 10. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

Effective leaders:

- a) Seek to make school more effective for each student, teachers and staff, families, and the community.
- b) Use methods of continuous improvement to achieve the vision, fulfill the mission, and promote the core values of the school.
- c) Prepare the school and the community for improvement, promoting readiness, an imperative for improvement, instilling mutual commitment and accountability, and developing the knowledge, skills, and motivation to succeed in improvement.
- d) Engage others in an ongoing process of evidence-based inquiry, learning, strategic goal setting, planning, implementation, and evaluation for continuous school and classroom improvement.
- e) Employ situationally-appropriate strategies for improvement, including transformational and incremental, adaptive approaches and attention to different phases of implementation.
- f) Assess and develop the capacity of staff to assess the value and applicability of emerging educational trends and the findings of research for the school and its improvement.
- g) Develop technically appropriate systems of data collection, management, analysis, and use, connecting as needed to the district office and external partners for support in planning, implementation, monitoring, feedback, and evaluation.
- h) Adopt a systems perspective and promote coherence among improvement efforts and all aspects of school organization, programs, and services.
- i) Manage uncertainty, risk, competing initiatives, and politics of change with courage and perseverance, providing support and encouragement, and openly communicating the need for, process for, and outcomes of improvement efforts.
- j) Develop and promote leadership among teachers and staff for inquiry, experimentation and innovation, and initiating and implementing improvement.



Action-Based Conversations:

Facilitator’s Guide to Exploring Accomplished Practice in Leadership

Core Prop 1: Accomplished educational leaders continuously cultivate their understanding of leadership and the change process to meet high levels of performance. *(Standard 1: Leadership for Results)*

Title: Assessing Leadership Style and Leveraging Resources

Brief Description: Participants will examine their practice in the area of leadership and consider the type of leader that they are. They will examine their areas of strength and consider their areas of potential growth. They will also consider the power of collaborating with teachers in leadership roles.

“Leadership is complex. Teaching and learning take place in the context of complex interdependent human organizations, requiring a leader who possesses deep knowledge of education and sophisticated relationship skills. Accomplished principals balance this complexity. They are able to incorporate the art and science of leadership to orchestrate the divers, demanding components of the organization.”

Protocols Included: Reality Check, Turn and Talk

Outcome-based objectives:

Objectives
Participants will assess areas of strength and areas of improvement in themselves and their teachers.
Participants will consider the different types of leadership and demands that are placed on leaders.
Participants will consider the benefits of growing teacher leadership within their school / district.

Length/Timing: 90 minutes

Materials or Special Set-up Required:

<p>“Reality Check” Activity Handout; Copy of the ASCD article - Charlotte Danielson “The Many Faces of Leadership”; Highlighters / post-it notes / etc.; LCD Projector / Laptop computer / Speakers</p>

Process:	Notes
<p>“Reality Check” Activity - adapted from Tom Siebold; Allow individuals to complete charts. Think about your daily interaction with the people who you lead. Generally speaking, determine the actual behaviors that define that interaction. Using the list of behaviors below, determine the amount of time (in percentages) that you generally spend on each behavior. Then in the second column, determine what you feel would be an ideal distribution of time (in percentages).</p>	~ 5 min
<p>“Reality Check” Small Group discussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is there a gap between how you should spend your energy and how you actually spend it? 2. Are there some behaviors that are taking up too much of your leadership time? Why? 	~ 15 min



Accomplished Leadership Series

<p>3. Are there some strategies that you can employ that would move you closer to your ideal distribution of behavior?</p> <p>Small group discussion with facilitator wrap-up.</p>	
<p>First Look - Standard 1</p> <p>Working Collaboratively</p> <p>Accomplished principals foster, encourage, celebrate, and honor multiple perspectives and voices, thereby creating an inclusive environment in which all are equally valued and energized in the pursuit of learning and increased student academic performance. They give priority to communication, exemplified by discussions that accelerate the work and the progress of the organization. By leveraging the power of relationships, including all stakeholders, and appropriately sharing leadership, these principals promote cohesion, collective effort, and cooperation to elevate organizational capacity. They inspire, motivate, and unite all stakeholders, within and outside the learning community so that the priorities of the larger community are reflected in the planning process. Accomplished principals position their own learning as a central element of their work and do so openly and give teacher reflection the same priority.</p> <p>Project this quote from Standard 1 on the board and ask participants to Think, Pair, Share their thoughts about it.</p>	~ 10 min
<p>“The Many Faces of Leadership” -Charlotte Danielson</p> <p><i>Question: Why teacher leadership and what can they do?</i></p> <p>After providing ample time for reading / annotating, the facilitator begins a full group conversation regarding the article and teacher leadership . (reminders to participants to consider the “Reality Check” exercise from the opening)</p>	~30 min
<p>Ted Talk - Turn and talk activity: Do you have (and remember) a “lollipop moment”? Discuss</p>	~ 10 min
<p>Jigsaw read of Standard 1: Accomplished Principal Standard #1</p> <p>Facilitator will ask participants divide into pairs to read selected sections of Standard #1. Jigsaw activity...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Achieving Results / Leading by Example ● Thinking in a Forward Fashion ● Thinking Strategically ● Working Collaboratively ● Leading Change ● Implementing Ideas and Changes Strategically ● Building Organizational Capacity <p>Each group will read their section and complete the Save the Last Work protocol with their group</p>	~30 min
<p>Following the Save the Last Word each group will create a poster on chart paper for their section capturing the main ideas or important connections to this standard.</p>	~20 min
<p>Whip around, 2 rounds: This made sense to me because.....and 1 thing that surprised me today was.....</p>	

Source(s):

Danielson, Charlotte. “The Many Faces of Leadership”. *Teacher Leadership That Strengthens Professional Practice*, 2006, Alexandria, VA: ASCD. Adapted ASCD with permission.; September 2007 | Volume 65 | Number 1; **Teachers as Leaders** Pages 14-19

[Reality Check activity created](#) by Tom Siebold.

Activity documented by: Chris Chank, NBCT; Principal 2019, Schenectady High School; formatted by Colleen McDonald, NBCT



Accomplished Leadership Series

Elevating the Profession through Leadership: A New Professional Learning Series

LOCATION: DATE

NATIONAL BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS

National Board Core Propositions for Accomplished Educational Leaders™

NT3

1

Agenda:

- Purpose
- Revisiting the Norms
- Reality Check
- Value of Collaboration
- Many Faces of Leadership
- Lollipop Moment
- Connecting with Standard 1



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2

Purpose: This series is designed for building leaders. This professional learning opportunity will provide rich, deep, collaborative action-based conversations to allow the personal and professional exploration of accomplished practice in leadership.



Essential Questions:

- What does accomplished leadership look like and sound like, in your building, with your population?
- What is the vision? How is it communicated?
- How is student and adult learning managed and monitored?
- How are collaborative partnerships built with families, stakeholders, and communities?

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3

Revisiting Our Norms



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4

Norms:

- **Equity:** Mind your own airtime. Speak up or scale back as needed.
- **Respect:** Assume the best of intentions. Seek to understand. Then strive to be understood.
- **Community:** Be vulnerable and authentic. Take risks. **Collaborate.** Trust that the wisdom is within the room.
- **Growth:** Own your own learning. Challenge each other **and yourself.** Provide processing time for this complex work.
- **Results:** Stay grounded in the task. Maintain focus with high engagement and low technology. Take necessary moments outside the room. Maintain a parking lot, and always identify next steps.
- **Bring levity!**

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5



1. Is there a gap between how you should spend your energy and how you actually spend it?
2. Are there some behaviors that are taking up too much of your leadership time? Why?
3. Are there some strategies that you can employ that would move you closer to your ideal distribution of behavior?

Accomplished Leadership Series

6

Working Collaboratively

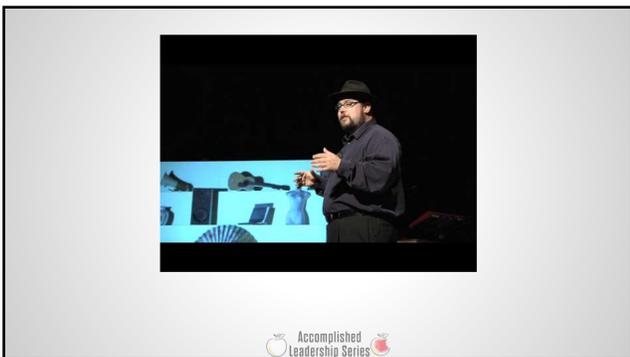
Accomplished principals foster, encourage, celebrate, and honor multiple perspectives and voices, thereby creating an inclusive environment in which all are equally valued and energized in the pursuit of learning and increased student academic performance. They give priority to communication, exemplified by discussions that accelerate the work and the progress of the organization. By leveraging the power of relationships, including all stakeholders, and appropriately sharing leadership, these principals promote cohesion, collective effort, and cooperation to elevate organizational capacity. They inspire, motivate, and unite all stakeholders, within and outside the learning community so that the priorities of the larger community are reflected in the planning process. Accomplished principals position their own learning as a central element of their work and do so openly and give teacher reflection the same priority.



7



8

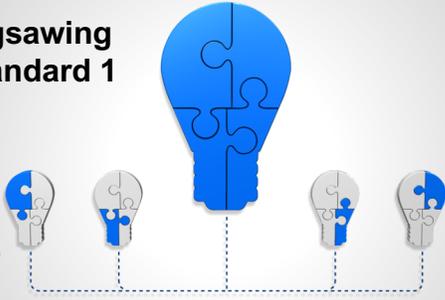


9


TURN AND TALK:
 Do you have or remember a “lollipop” moment?


10

Jigsawing Standard 1




11

Breakout Rooms: Save the Last Word:

Volunteer identifies and reads aloud to the group their chosen statement.

They say nothing else at this time.

Each group member has 1 minute to respond to the passage.

The volunteer then has 2 minutes to share why they chose that part and respond to--or build on-- what they heard from the group




12

Using chart paper:

- capture the main ideas and/or
- important connections to this standard.



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Whip Around

This made sense to me because.....and 1 thing that surprised me today was.....

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14

FUTURE DATES:

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15



16

Facilitators:

Name

Email

Resources:

www.accomplishedteachingny.org

nbpts.org

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Behavior	Percentage of time spent on each activity.	Ideally the percentage of time you would devote to each behavior.
Informing		
Directing		
Clarifying or Justifying		
Persuading		
Collaborating		
Brainstorming or Envisioning		
Reflecting (Quiet time for thinking)		
Observing		
Disciplining		
Resolving interpersonal conflicts		
Praising and/or encouraging		

Accomplished [Leader] Principal Standard I : Leadership for Results

(excerpt pgs. 22 and 23)

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Working Collaboratively

Accomplished principals foster, encourage, celebrate, and honor multiple perspectives and voices, thereby creating an inclusive environment in which all are equally valued and energized in the pursuit of learning and increased student academic performance. They give priority to communication, exemplified by discussions that accelerate the work and the progress of the organization. By leveraging the power of relationships, including all stakeholders, and appropriately sharing leadership, these principals promote cohesion, collective effort, and cooperation to elevate organizational capacity. They inspire, motivate, and unite all stakeholders, within and outside the learning community so that the priorities of the larger community are reflected in the planning process. Accomplished principals position their own learning as a central element of their work and do so openly and give teacher reflection the same priority.

Accomplished principals seek opportunities to work with others in their extended organization as well as with the greater community. They understand the greater local, state, and national context in which their role and that of their organization exists. Because businesses, institutions of higher education, faith-based groups, and social organizations are integral to the learning community, these principals not only seek advice, input, and resources from such entities but also find ways for them to contribute to the well-being of the organization. Accomplished principals see value in and pursue Leadership for Results 23 I collaborative relationships with unions and other organizations that represent school personnel and with their building-level leaders.

Accomplished principals craft solutions to problems by working within the learning community, tapping the expertise and abilities of the staff to generate these solutions. For example, these principals may support and provide the resources for a group of teachers to work together to develop effective teaching strategies for targeted populations.

By empowering and engaging all individuals, accomplished principals gain commitment, focus effort, unify action, and enhance morale. These principals expertly promote formal and informal collaboration to achieve success in the learning community. For example, they may establish committees of internal and external stakeholders to provide guidance for initiatives and programs. Accomplished principals have the fortitude to know when to redirect efforts based on changing circumstances or goals. As a result, their organizations are imbued with a purposeful sense of urgency and unified around the mission of improving student learning.



The Many Faces of Leadership

Charlotte Danielson

Teachers can find a wealth of opportunities to extend their influence beyond their own classrooms to their teaching teams, schools, and districts.

In every good school, there are teachers whose vision extends beyond their own classrooms—even beyond their own teams or departments. Such teachers recognize that students' school experiences depend not only on interaction with individual teachers, but also on the complex systems in place throughout the school and district. This awareness prompts these teachers to want to influence change. They experience professional restlessness—what some have called the “leadership itch.” Sometimes on their own initiative and sometimes within a more formal structure, these professionals find a variety of ways to exercise teacher leadership.

Why Teacher Leadership?

Today more than ever, a number of interconnected factors argue for the necessity of teacher leadership in schools.

Teaching is a flat profession. In most professions, as the practitioner gains experience, he or she has the opportunity to exercise greater responsibility and assume more significant challenges. This is not true of teaching. The 20-year veteran's responsibilities are essentially the same as those of the newly licensed novice. In many settings, the only way for a teacher to extend his or her influence is to become an administrator. Many teachers recognize that this is not the right avenue for them. The job of an administrator entails work that does not interest them, but they still have the urge to exercise wider influence in their schools and in the profession. This desire for greater responsibility, if left unfulfilled, can lead to frustration and even cynicism.

Teachers' tenure in schools is longer than that of administrators. In many settings, administrators remain in their positions for only three to four years, whereas teachers stay far longer. Teachers often hold the institutional memory; they are the custodians of the school culture. School districts that want to improve make a wise investment when they cultivate and encourage teacher leaders, because they are in a

position to take the long view and carry out long-range projects.

The demands of the modern principalship are practically impossible to meet. Principals today are expected to be visionaries (instilling a sense of purpose in their staff) and competent managers (maintaining the physical plant, submitting budgets on time), as well as instructional leaders (coaching teachers in the nuances of classroom practice). In addition, the principal has become the point person for accountability requirements imposed by states and the federal government, and he or she must respond to multiple stakeholders (parents, staff members, the district central office, and the larger community). Under such pressure from a range of sources, many administrators simply cannot devote enough time and energy to school improvement.

Principals have limited expertise. Like all educators, most principals have their own areas of instructional expertise. A principal who was formerly a mathematics teacher may know a lot about research-based instructional practices in math, but not much about instruction in world languages. The school administrator cannot be an expert in everything. Individual teachers, of course, have their own particular areas of knowledge, but a group of teacher leaders can supply the variety of professional knowledge needed for sustained school improvement. Given these factors, school improvement depends more than ever on the active involvement of teacher leaders. School administrators can't do it all.

Qualities and Skills of Teacher Leaders

Teacher leaders serve in two fundamental types of roles: formal and informal. *Formal teacher leaders* fill such roles as department chair, master teacher, or instructional coach. These individuals typically apply for their positions and are chosen through a selection process. Ideally, they also receive training for their new responsibilities. Formal teacher leaders play vital roles in most schools. In many cases, these teacher leaders manage curriculum projects, facilitate teacher study groups, provide workshops, and order materials. They may also evaluate other teachers, in which case their colleagues are likely to regard them as pseudoadministrators.

Informal teacher leaders, in contrast, emerge spontaneously and organically from the teacher ranks. Instead of being selected, they take the initiative to address a problem or institute a new program. They have no positional authority; their influence stems from the respect they command from their colleagues through their expertise and practice.

Whether they are selected for a formal leadership role or spontaneously assume an informal role, effective teacher leaders exhibit important skills, values, and dispositions. Teacher leaders call others to action and energize them with the aim of improving teaching and learning. As Michael Fullan writes,

The litmus test of all leadership is whether it mobilizes people's commitment to putting their energy into actions designed to improve things. It is individual commitment, but above all it is collective mobilization.¹

A hallmark of leadership, therefore, is the ability to collaborate with others. Teacher leaders must enlist colleagues to support their vision, build consensus among diverse groups of educators, and convince others of the importance of what they are proposing and the feasibility of their general plan for improvement. They must be respected for their own instructional skills. They also must understand evidence and information and recognize the need to focus on those aspects of the school's program that will yield important gains in student learning. A number of values and dispositions make certain individuals ideally suited for teacher leadership.

Effective teacher leaders are open-minded and respectful of others' views. They display optimism and enthusiasm, confidence and decisiveness. They persevere and do not permit setbacks to derail an important initiative they are pursuing. On the other hand, they are flexible and willing to try a different approach if the first effort runs into roadblocks. Many attributes of good teacher leaders are fundamentally the same as the attributes of good teachers: persuasiveness, open-mindedness, flexibility, confidence, and expertise in their fields. Despite these similarities, however, working with colleagues is profoundly different from working with students, and the skills that teachers learn in their preparation programs do not necessarily prepare them to extend their leadership beyond their own classrooms. To assume a leadership role, they may need expertise in curriculum planning, assessment design, data analysis, and the like. They may also need to develop the abilities to listen actively, facilitate meetings, keep a group discussion on track, decide on a course of action, and monitor progress. These skills are not typically taught in teacher preparation programs.

What Do Teacher Leaders Do?

Three main areas of school life benefit from the involvement of teacher leaders (see "Where Teacher Leaders Extend Their Reach"). In each area, this involvement may take place within the teacher leader's own department or team, across the school, or beyond the school. No setting is more "advanced" than another; each has its own requirements and calls on its own particular skills and inclinations.

Within the Department or Team

Leading change within one's own department or team may require considerable interpersonal skill and tact. The success of such an effort also depends on the teacher leader's having established credibility and trust with his or her colleagues.

Leadership at this level can take many forms. Teacher leaders may coordinate a program in which students in the 6th grade read to kindergarten students during their lunch period. Or they may invite their colleagues to examine the reasons for student underperformance in writing. In many different ways, teacher leaders

mobilize the efforts of their closest colleagues to enhance the school's program for the benefit of students.

For example, William, a middle school math teacher, brought a situation to his 6th grade teaching team, asking for their thoughts. He had noticed that many of the girls in his class were not participating in group activities as enthusiastically as he expected.

One of William's colleagues offered to visit his class and see whether she could help him understand the situation better. She observed several classes and took notes on what she saw and heard: the nature of the activities students were asked to do, types of questions the teacher and students asked, interactions among the students, and so on.

What she observed was stunning: William, unknown to himself, was not challenging the girls in the class as much as the boys: When a girl encountered difficulty, he supplied the answer or a significant "hint"; he called on the boys more frequently than the girls to answer challenging questions; and he was more likely to encourage the boys to challenge one another's thinking about the math problems.

William was astonished at his colleague's findings and set about changing his behavior. His approach to this situation revealed extraordinary openness and courage. He and his colleague reported their findings and William's plan for action to the rest of the team. Soon, other teachers on the 6th grade team set about systematically assisting one another with similar questions and situations, as well as bringing the results back to the team for discussion.

Across the School

Some of the most powerful opportunities for teacher leadership relate to areas that have enormous influence on the daily lives of students across the school, such as the master schedule, grading policy, or student programs. For example, many students experience the most memorable activities of their school careers through participating in the school play, being on the debate team, or taking an advanced class that enables them to engage deeply with academic content. Ensuring that students have full access to such opportunities involves a collective effort, requiring discussion and consideration of alternatives. This is the work of leadership. And although administrators play an important facilitative role, teachers—who are closer to the

action—frequently put forward important ideas and can assume a leadership role.

Grading policies also have a profound effect on how students experience their learning activities. Jennifer, a high school history teacher, found herself troubled by her students' responses to tests and papers. She read their work carefully and provided thoughtful feedback. But when she returned their papers, the students seemed interested only in the grade; some never even read her careful comments. Also, she noticed that some students would decline to turn in work altogether if they knew it was going to be late, believing that it was not "worth it" to complete it. Jennifer invited interested teachers from across the school to join her in exploring alternate approaches to grading. The teachers met for an entire school year, and each of them conducted systematic discussions with their students. Toward the end of the year, the group made a recommendation to the entire faculty; as a result, the school piloted a different grading system the following year that incorporated formative assessment and student self-assessment. At the end of three years, the school's approach to grading was considerably different; the teachers were convinced that the new system resulted in greater student buy-in and commitment to high-quality work.

Beyond the School

Teacher leaders contribute beyond their own school when they participate in a districtwide teacher evaluation committee or curriculum team, make a presentation at a state or national conference, serve on a state standards board, or speak at a school board meeting as the voice of teachers in the community. Again, these teachers are doing more than teaching their own students (as brilliant as they may be in that work); they are influencing the larger education environment in their communities and perhaps their states.

For example, Maria, a high school Spanish teacher, noticed that there weren't good opportunities for her to meet with and learn from other Spanish teachers in the area. The state organization of language teachers had not recruited many members in her school or in neighboring schools.

Maria decided to begin a chapter of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese in her area. She sent e-mail notices to teachers in other schools and scheduled an organizational meeting.

Although response was slow at first, over the course of several years the chapter became vibrant. Before long, members were scheduling visits to one another's schools and preparing presentations for the state conference.

Conditions that Promote Teacher Leadership

Not every school is hospitable to the emergence of teacher leaders, particularly informal teacher leaders. The school administrator plays a crucial role in fostering the conditions that facilitate teacher leadership, including the following:

A safe environment for risk taking. Teachers must be confident that administrators and other teachers will not criticize them for expressing ideas that might seem unusual at first. Some of the most effective approaches to solving difficult issues in schools may not be intuitively obvious but may require that educators think creatively, which can only happen in a safe environment. School administrators should make it clear that teachers are safe to express ideas and take professional risks.

For example, a principal could raise discussion questions at a staff meeting: What would make the professional environment safe in our school? How would it be similar to the climate you create in your own classrooms? Following the establishment of these professional norms, the principal could schedule a brief, but regular, time at staff meetings for “wacko ideas,” during which any teacher could propose doing something different.

Administrators who encourage teacher leaders. Administrators' commitment to cultivating teacher leaders plays an essential role in their development. Administrators must be proactive in helping teachers acquire the skills they need to take advantage of opportunities for leadership (data analysis, meeting facilitation, and so on). Unfortunately, some administrators jealously guard their turf, apparently fearing that ambitious teacher leaders will somehow undermine their own authority. In fact, one of the enduring paradoxes of leadership is that the more an administrator shares power, the more authority he or she gains.

Absence of the “tall poppy syndrome.” It's not only administrators who, on occasion, stand in the way of teacher leaders. Sometimes the teachers themselves resist taking on leadership roles, or make it difficult for their colleagues to do so. In Australia, this is called the *tall poppy syndrome*—those who stick their heads up risk being cut down to size. This phenomenon might take the form of teachers' reluctance to announce to their colleagues that they have been recognized by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. To counteract this syndrome, the school administrator needs to create a culture that honors teachers who step outside their traditional roles and take on leadership projects.

Opportunities to learn leadership skills. As noted earlier, the skills required for teacher leadership are not part of the preparation program for most teachers. If teacher leaders are to emerge and make their full contribution, they need opportunities to learn the necessary skills of curriculum planning, instructional improvement, assessment design, collaboration, and facilitation. Teachers can learn these skills through school-level professional development, of course, but they may also build these skills through districtwide or university-based courses and seminars. Whatever the source, the opportunities must be available and sufficiently convenient for teachers to take advantage of them.

The Need for Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership is an idea whose time has come. The unprecedented demands being placed on schools today require leadership at every level. Yet many schools are still organized as though all the important decisions are made by administrators and carried out by teachers.

In the most successful schools, teachers supported by administrators take initiative to improve schoolwide policies and programs, teaching and learning, and communication. By understanding the phenomenon of teacher leadership and helping teachers develop the skills required to act as leaders, we will improve schools and help teachers realize their full potential.

Where Teacher Leaders Extend Their Reach

The following are just a few examples of ways in which teachers may exercise their leadership within three areas of school life.

Schoolwide Policies and Programs

- Work with colleagues to design the schedule so that students have longer periods of time in each subject.
- Serve as the building liaison to student teachers.
- Lead a school task force to overhaul the school's approach to homework.
- Represent the school in a districtwide or statewide program for drug-free schools.

Teaching and Learning

- Organize a lesson study to examine the teaching team's or department's approach to a certain topic or concept.
- Serve on a schoolwide committee to analyze student achievement data.
- Help design a teacher mentoring program for the district.
- Make a presentation at a state or local conference on alternative assessment methods.

Communication and Community Relations

- Publish a department newsletter for parents.
- Initiate a regular meeting time to confer with colleagues about individual students.
- Develop procedures for specialist and generalist teachers to share their assessments of and plans for individual students.
- Serve on the district or state parent-teacher association.
- Lead an initiative to formulate methods for students who leave the district to carry information with them about their learning.

*Source: From *Teacher Leadership That Strengthens Professional Practice*, by Charlotte Danielson, 2006, Alexandria, VA: ASCD. Adapted with permission.*

Endnote

- 1 Fullan, M. (2007). *Leading in a culture of change* (Rev. ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, p. 9.

Standard I

Leadership for Results

Accomplished principals lead with a sense of urgency and achieve the highest results for all students and adults. They build organizational capacity by developing leadership in others. These dynamic, forward-thinking principals lead collaborative organizations that realize and sustain positive change that enhances teacher practice and improves student learning.

Accomplished principals achieve positive results for students and adults. These principals measure performance results through qualitative and quantitative means. For example, with students they may assess engagement, attendance rates, test scores, or discipline referrals. With the adults the accomplished principal may assess levels of collaboration and the quality of classroom instruction. Accomplished principals embrace the responsibility of teacher and staff evaluation, offering support and guidance through consistent classroom visits and dialogue. Accomplished principals know that it is through deep professional conversation that teachers can learn and grow in their practice, and they use the evaluation process as one means to that end.

Accomplished principals willingly give of themselves to meet the high demands of a complex, evolving human organization. Although accomplished principals have the leadership skills to act independently, the most accomplished work interdependently developing the skills of others. These principals understand their strengths and their passions in relationship to their leadership role. They are self-directed leaders who monitor, manage, and motivate themselves and others. Accomplished principals balance the intellectual, emotional, and physical demands of leadership and demonstrate resilience.

Accomplished principals understand the complex and challenging task of effectively leading a learning community. These principals recognize that leadership must be shared and do so with those who have the requisite skills to lead, while also nurturing those skills in others throughout the organization, including capitalizing on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) and other accomplished teachers. These principals build leadership capacity in others to ensure the stability of the organization even in their absence.

To lead effective organizations, accomplished principals embody and strategically employ interrelated aspects of leadership that require a balance of substance and style. Accomplished principals demonstrate these aspects:

- achieving results
- leading by example
- thinking in a forward fashion
- thinking strategically
- working collaboratively
- leading change
- implementing ideas and changes strategically
- building organizational capacity

Achieving Results

Accomplished principals believe that every student and adult will achieve his or her highest potential. They act in accordance with that belief by placing students at the core of all decisions. As part of the process, these principals set targets, address challenges, and analyze data to drive their decisions. These principals embrace accountability, holding themselves and others in the learning community accountable for positive results.

Leading by Example

To lead others in accomplishing common goals and objectives, these principals demonstrate multiple dynamic attributes. They have integrity and consistently display behaviors that garner trust, respect, and the allegiance of the learning community. Accomplished principals are confident and tenacious in their pursuit of high standards, yet they bring a generous dose of humility to their role by making their own practice and continuous learning public, modeling the same professional growth expected of teachers and staff. This means accomplished principals are prepared to take risks as they relentlessly pursue their own growth as a foundational part of their work. They approach situations with courage and determination, while remaining flexible, inclusive, and open to new ideas.

Accomplished principals skillfully draw on personal insight and experience. They know how to choose and use appropriate strategies and skills in various situations to achieve successful student outcomes. When faced with a challenging or controversial decision that is in the best interests of academic achievement, these principals explain the context of the situation, provide background, and communicate transparently. They strive to reach consensus without compromising the interests of the parties involved. Accomplished principals have the courage to step into any situation and do what is best for students. For example, such a principal who is well versed in research may decide to

eliminate low-level classes, require that all students take grade-level courses, and support all efforts by teachers to provide appropriate interventions.

Thinking in a Forward Fashion

Accomplished principals are knowledgeable about global trends. They understand and realize that forward thinking is paramount to preparing students, and the adults who serve their needs, for a global society. They advance the organization by exhibiting an entrepreneurial spirit, a pioneering attitude, a technologically innovative approach, and risk-taking that is grounded in reality. These principals are driven to push the organization to new heights to achieve strong student performance in the context of the learning community.

Accomplished principals recognize students as digital learners, with an unprecedented ability to access, acquire, and integrate information. Because technology is instrumental in bringing the world to the learner, these principals make it a priority to acquire and use state-of-the-art technologies to increase interconnectivity in the organization. They find ways to facilitate communication in the learning community and the world at large through multiple forms of media.

Realizing that students today will be the global citizens of tomorrow, accomplished principals raise students' awareness of the world around them. They arrange for students' exposure to multiple cultures. They know that forward thinking is not only about technology but also about capacities to adapt to a changing and more diverse world. Because it is impossible to predict with certainty the world in which today's students will function as adults, accomplished principals ensure that students develop the essential skills of problem solving, critical thinking, and collaboration to succeed in that future. As an example of such forward thinking, they might look at opportunities to bring in members of the business community to discuss the transferable skills that students need for flexibility in their careers. In addition, they might facilitate innovative ways to organize students and teachers for success. These principals know that preparation is not only about content but also about the skills needed to access emerging technologies and resources.

Thinking Strategically

Accomplished principals are intentional strategic thinkers. They possess and maintain a deep knowledge of best practices and current research within and outside education. These principals plan in collaboration with their teams for high performance by diagnosing needs, designing solutions, prescribing actions, achieving results, and evaluating effectiveness. Accomplished principals explicitly articulate the link between selected strategies or solutions and the problems they are meant to address. They ensure that stakeholders can clearly understand why specific strategies are brought to bear



on the unique and particular problems in a school and on what basis they can be expected to succeed. In charting a course of action, accomplished principals pursue diverse opinions. They generate collective buy-in by strategically involving stakeholders in the process of continuous improvement. For example, they may use electronic systems to collect and sort feedback from stakeholders on a particular issue—such as student achievement, school safety, the budget, or the school improvement plan—and send updates to stakeholders.

Accomplished principals seek balance and congruency between the individual and organizational dimensions of the learning community. While cognizant of competing tensions in the organization, they diligently maintain the focus on the core business of learning. Accomplished principals understand their role as it relates to the governing body of the organization. When facilitating decision making that affects the entire organization, these principals explain and communicate how the individual systems and processes within and outside the learning community will mesh to support the decision—from classroom use to bus pickup to food service to district testing schedules. They consider the cascading effects of decisions, such as changes in exam schedules. Although such decisions may have unintended consequences, accomplished principals minimize and plan for such situations. They drive toward achieving instructional goals and focus the demands of the organization to this end.

Working Collaboratively

Accomplished principals foster, encourage, celebrate, and honor multiple perspectives and voices, thereby creating an inclusive environment in which all are equally valued and energized in the pursuit of learning and increased student academic performance. They give priority to communication, exemplified by discussions that accelerate the work and the progress of the organization. By leveraging the power of relationships, including all stakeholders, and appropriately sharing leadership, these principals promote cohesion, collective effort, and cooperation to elevate organizational capacity. They inspire, motivate, and unite all stakeholders, within and outside the learning community so that the priorities of the larger community are reflected in the planning process. Accomplished principals position their own learning as a central element of their work and do so openly and give teacher reflection the same priority.

Accomplished principals seek opportunities to work with others in their extended organization as well as with the greater community. They understand the greater local, state, and national context in which their role and that of their organization exists. Because businesses, institutions of higher education, faith-based groups, and social organizations are integral to the learning community, these principals not only seek advice, input, and resources from such entities but also find ways for them to contribute to the well-being of the organization. Accomplished principals see value in and pursue

collaborative relationships with unions and other organizations that represent school personnel and with their building-level leaders.

Accomplished principals craft solutions to problems by working within the learning community, tapping the expertise and abilities of the staff to generate these solutions. For example, these principals may support and provide the resources for a group of teachers to work together to develop effective teaching strategies for targeted populations.

By empowering and engaging all individuals, accomplished principals gain commitment, focus effort, unify action, and enhance morale. These principals expertly promote formal and informal collaboration to achieve success in the learning community. For example, they may establish committees of internal and external stakeholders to provide guidance for initiatives and programs. Accomplished principals have the fortitude to know when to redirect efforts based on changing circumstances or goals. As a result, their organizations are imbued with a purposeful sense of urgency and unified around the mission of improving student learning.

Leading Change

Accomplished principals lead change as they build sustainable organizations that are driven by the pursuit of excellence. They understand that change is continuous. These principals are firmly grounded in their understanding of change theory and apply it appropriately. They are aware of different change models and of the environment in which they operate. They are vigilant in scanning for opportunities that benefit all. Accomplished principals know who the key decision makers are, and they know how to initiate, implement, and sustain change while maintaining the stability of the organization. These principals know and anticipate where pressure points are and continuously apply positive pressure, so that the learning community is constantly learning and growing. They capitalize on opportunities to advance the vision and mission.

Accomplished principals tackle challenges. They skillfully negotiate with stakeholders within and outside the learning community. Outside the immediate learning community, for example, they might meet with those who resist change in order to engage and involve them in moving the learning community forward. Accomplished principals lay the groundwork before change occurs. Facilitating change and generating commitment to it is a critical focus of such principals. When facilitating change, these principals incorporate external and internal support. For example, they may help people understand the change from a letter-based grading system to a standards-based grading system by hosting focus groups, soliciting public comment, and engaging in community dialogue.

Accomplished principals understand the demand and capacity for change and are willing to take calculated risks for continuous improvement. To that end, they create cogent systems and processes that enable the organization to implement and sustain



change. These principals clearly convey how a change will enhance the performance of students and adults.

Implementing Ideas and Changes Strategically

Accomplished principals skillfully realize the vision and mission of the learning community by turning words into actions. Working collaboratively, these principals communicate the vision in a way that enables others to see and understand their roles in achieving the mission. They ensure that instructional and operational systems are aligned to support the implementation of the vision, vigorously guarding against distractions and abandoning redundancies.

Working with others, accomplished principals not only set the right targets but also get the right results. They conduct constant critical analysis, asking “Are we focusing on the right thing to get us where we want to go?” To do so, they create systems to access real-time data and purposefully monitor progress toward goals. These principals gather, analyze, and leverage data to make sure decisions address organizational needs. For example, they look at social, emotional and academic learning; staff practice and performance; student attendance and referral rates, and transiency rates; and levels of parent participation to identify trends and establish priorities. They scan what is taking place in real time and make appropriate adjustments by constantly refining systems.

Accomplished principals are proactive, using data to anticipate and appropriately intervene, if necessary, rather than responding to failure. These principals correctly identify root causes for lack of performance and establish and monitor appropriate leading and lagging performance indicators. For example, weekly student referral rates may be a leading indicator of student suspension, which may be a lagging indicator of student grade-level retention. Accomplished principals work with teachers to use current data to assess where students are in a particular content area in the fall, instead of at the end of year, to keep students on track. Another example would be responding appropriately to quarterly and mid-year assessments of school safety.

Accomplished principals ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and explicitly linked to student learning and outcomes. They conduct difficult conversations when necessary and hold themselves and others accountable for results. In those conversations, they bring about clarity, thus sharpening the focus on the purpose of action and its contribution to student achievement. These principals foster confidence, credibility, and trust by ensuring that their decisions and actions are transparent, inclusive, and consistent with the organization’s vision and mission.

Building Organizational Capacity

Accomplished principals realize that the strength of an organization lies in its human capital. They understand that the effectiveness of teachers directly correlates with

increased student performance. These principals take the primary responsibility for attracting, retaining, and developing high-quality teachers and other staff. These principals clearly identify and nurture the efforts, skills, and attitudes necessary for all to achieve the organization’s mission and demonstrate the efficacy of the teaching methods in student performance. These principals communicate expectations and are courageous in holding everyone accountable—especially themselves. They value and respect the strengths of individuals, and they create support systems to maximize the performance and retention of the right people. Accomplished principals create and maintain a positive work environment in which people improve their knowledge and develop their skills, so that they enhance the work that they do with students.

Accomplished principals cultivate the varying talents of everyone within the organization. These principals consciously seek to develop leadership capacity throughout the organization by ensuring that different lateral experiences and promotional opportunities exist. They develop the capacity of others through training, guided practice, and mentoring. As they do so, teachers and staff take on more responsibility and more roles—formal and informal—that involve leadership. For example, these principals would capitalize on the expertise of accomplished teachers, particularly National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs), to work with colleagues. As another example, when leading the organization to a structure of small learning communities, such a principal would provide professional development for teachers who are going to assume the role of leading cross-content-area teams. This principal would also provide professional development to support teachers in acquiring the appropriate skill set for working with adults. Additionally, an accomplished principal might develop the supervisory skills of a custodian, enabling the custodian to move from doing his or her own job well to leading others in doing their jobs well.

Accomplished principals design and implement succession plans—for every position in the organization—that allow for leadership and growth. They provide for sustainability and stability by ensuring that the organization has a depth of talent to move the learning community forward.

Reflections on Standard I





Save the Last Word for ME

Developed by Patricia Averette.

Purpose

To clarify and deepen our thinking about a text

Roles

Timekeeper/facilitator, who both participates and keeps the process moving

Time

Approximately 30 minutes

Process

- The process is designed to build on each other's thinking, not to enter into a dialogue.
 - Participants may decide to have an open dialogue about the text at the end of the 30 minutes.
 - Timing is important; each round should last approximately 7 minutes.
1. Create a group of 4 participants. Choose a timekeeper (who also participates) who has a watch.
 2. Each participant silently identifies what she/he considers to be (for her/him) the most significant idea addressed in the article, and highlights that passage.
 3. When the group is ready, a volunteer member identifies the part of the article that she/he found to be most significant and reads it out loud to the group. This person (the *presenter*) says nothing about why she/he chose that particular passage.
 4. The group should pause for a moment to consider the passage before moving to the next step.
 5. The other 3 participants each have 1 minute to respond to the passage — saying what it makes them think about, what questions it raises for them, etc.
 6. The first participant then has 3 minutes to state why she/he chose that part of the article and to respond to — or build on — what she/he heard from her/his colleagues.
 7. The same pattern is followed until all 4 members of the group have had a chance to be the presenter and to have the “last word.”
 8. Optional open dialogue about the text and the ideas and questions raised during the first part of the protocol.
 9. Debrief the experience. How was this a useful way to explore the ideas in the text and to explore your own thinking?

STANDARD 10. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

Effective leaders:

- a) Seek to make school more effective for each student, teachers and staff, families, and the community.
- b) Use methods of continuous improvement to achieve the vision, fulfill the mission, and promote the core values of the school.
- c) Prepare the school and the community for improvement, promoting readiness, an imperative for improvement, instilling mutual commitment and accountability, and developing the knowledge, skills, and motivation to succeed in improvement.
- d) Engage others in an ongoing process of evidence-based inquiry, learning, strategic goal setting, planning, implementation, and evaluation for continuous school and classroom improvement.
- e) Employ situationally-appropriate strategies for improvement, including transformational and incremental, adaptive approaches and attention to different phases of implementation.
- f) Assess and develop the capacity of staff to assess the value and applicability of emerging educational trends and the findings of research for the school and its improvement.
- g) Develop technically appropriate systems of data collection, management, analysis, and use, connecting as needed to the district office and external partners for support in planning, implementation, monitoring, feedback, and evaluation.
- h) Adopt a systems perspective and promote coherence among improvement efforts and all aspects of school organization, programs, and services.
- i) Manage uncertainty, risk, competing initiatives, and politics of change with courage and perseverance, providing support and encouragement, and openly communicating the need for, process for, and outcomes of improvement efforts.
- j) Develop and promote leadership among teachers and staff for inquiry, experimentation and innovation, and initiating and implementing improvement.

Action-Based Conversations: Facilitator’s Guide to Exploring Accomplished Practice in Leadership

Core Prop 2: Accomplished educational leaders have a clear vision and inspire and engage stakeholders in developing and realizing the mission.

(DRAFT National Board Standard 2: Vision and Mission; PSEL Standard 1: Mission, Vision, and Core Values)

Title: The Art and Impact of Crafting a Shared Vision

Brief Description: Participants will explore, through the standards and articles, then discuss the importance and ways to engage stakeholders in the creation of a school level vision statement. They will review current research, case studies, and craft an action plan to develop or revise their current vision.

“[Accomplished] leaders communicate with and engage all stakeholders in a compelling manner, transforming the environment and attitude from one of compliance to one of shared commitment and shared responsibility.”

~DRAFT National Board Standard 2: Vision and Mission, pg. 27

Protocols Included: [Metacognitive Activity](#), [Text-based seminar protocol](#), [Affinity Mapping](#)

Outcome-based objectives:

<i>Objectives</i>
Identify elements necessary to craft a shared vision statement.
Create an action plan to engage stakeholders in developing or revising the school vision statement.

Length/Timing: 2 hours

Materials or Special Set-up Required:

LCD and computer for PPT; chart paper, markers, post-its, highlighters. Articles:
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Process:

<i>Steps and Time</i>	<i>Notes, materials, etc.</i>
Using the images, participants will select an image that best describes their thinking about establishing a vision. Discussion: The <u> (Image) </u> best describes my thinking about establishing a vision because <u> </u> .	Metacognitive Activity ~10 minutes
View the ASCD video and copy of the transcript .	~5 min http://www.ascd.org/ascd-express/vol5/510-video.aspx



Accomplished Leadership Series



<p>Guiding question: what suggestions does Dufour make in developing a shared vision?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Discuss and chart</p>	<p>~10 min</p>
<p>Diving into the Standards-Quiet Read</p> <p>DRAFT NB Standard 2-Vision and Mission</p> <p>PSEL Standard 1: Mission, Vision, and Core Values</p> <p>Text-Based Seminar Protocol: <i>Framing Question--</i> <i>What steps need to be taken to develop a school vision?</i></p> <p>Facilitator cues time to annotate text with framing question in mind.</p> <p>Facilitator opens a roundtable conversation about developing a vision (bringing in ideas about collaboration, articulation, shared commitment, reflection and adjustment, etc)</p>	<p>Text-based seminar protocol: https://drive.google.com/open?id=0ByqLj3YI9Zm7d2pjZjl6c2lTSGM</p> <p>~30 minutes</p>
<p>Pause for thought: Reflect on what you have learned in discussing the standards.. Think about your school and the people around you. • Who are likely to be your allies? • Who will it be difficult for you to influence? • What strategies might you use to do this? ~5 min</p>	
<p>Turn and Talk: Drilling down to the Why</p> <p>What factors will make up your “why”?</p> <p>How might you collect the information you need?</p> <p>What stakeholders will need to be included?</p> <p>How might you reach out to them?</p>	<p>Simon Sinek https://youtu.be/IPYeClTpxw</p> <p>~ 15 min</p>
<p>Discussing Case Studies:</p> <p>After reading Case 1, table discussions and share out:</p> <p>What is your response to Mrs Chadha’s vision statement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did she do right? • Why do you think nothing changed? • What might she have done differently? 	<p>~15 min</p>
<p>Pause and Think: The vision is much more than a few words of vague intention; it embodies the values of the community and is the foundation for actions that will lead to school improvem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your school have a vision statement? If so, how was it formed? Who was involved? • If your school has a vision statement, what values does the statement embody? • If you don’t yet have a vision statement, what values do you think are important? 	
<p>Affinity Mapping Values</p>	<p>Hang chart paper (depending on the size of the group , 4-8 participants per chart)</p>



Accomplished Leadership Series

<p>Each participant will (silently and on their own) write on post-its what they would like to see valued at their school, One idea or value per post it.</p> <p>Have participants in table groups organize their ideas in “natural” categories. (In silence)</p> <p>Once groups have settled on categories have them place notes in columns and then talking come up with a name for each column.</p> <p>Ask each group to capture the values in one simple statement at the top/bottom of the chart.</p> <p>Report out ideas to the larger group or gallery walk.</p> <p>What themes emerged?</p> <p>What surprises?</p> <p>How did this expand your thinking around crafting your vision statement?</p>	<p>Modified Affinity Mapping</p> <p>~25 min</p>
<p>How does creating the “why” connect with the Draft NB and PSEL Standards? ~5 min</p>	

Source(s):

National School Reform Faculty; TedTalks; Teacher Education through School-based Support in India; ASCD

Activity documented by: Colleen McDonald, NBCT

Directions: Select an image that best describes your thinking about establishing a vision statement. Be able to explain the metaphor to a partner or the group.



<http://www.ascd.org/ascd-express/vol5/510-video.aspx>

Transcript:

Rick DuFour: A vision is simply an attempt to describe the school we're hoping to become, the school that we want to look like four years from now or five years from now.

Karen Dyer: A learning community shares a common vision. They share a common understanding of how to go about getting to that vision. And they share a common commitment to a vision.

DuFour: We began our process of trying to clarify our purpose and vision by bringing together representatives of the faculty, of the business community, of parents, of students, and of the administrative team. We spent some time making sure that all of the members of that group were aware of the research basis—in terms of effective schools and improving schools, what do good schools look like? We didn't want to just bring people together and have them pool their opinions. We wanted this to be a thoughtful, studied exploration of the question: what can schools do in order to be more effective?

We asked them to identify the kinds of characteristics that they thought would make us a better school. If they could develop their ideal school, what would that school look like? Then, we wrote a narrative description based on those common themes that were important to each of the groups.

Narrator: Here are several tips for developing a vision for your school.

DuFour: Begin that exploration by trying to examine the research in terms of what we know about good schools.

Dyer: There's a lot of good research. There are a lot of good best practices out there that we can use. There's no reason to reinvent the wheel.

Educator (in meeting): So what are we going to put down here? What is one practice, procedure, policy that we could employ?

Student: One of our major points was having a teacher-student advisory for four years.

Narrator: Here's another tip.

DuFour: Try and step back and look at the criticisms of the traditional structure and culture of schools. Those criticisms should be examined as part of this process, too, to broaden our perspective and to take a look at what we know about good schools and what we know are some of the obstacles that are preventing schools from becoming the kinds of learning organizations that they should be.

One traditional obstacle to schools' moving forward is the fact that there is an inherent tradition of teacher isolation in schools. And it has to be addressed and overcome if a school's going to become a collaborative learning community. The fact that schools are very often run as top-down hierarchies and people aren't given a voice in the decision-making process is another tradition. So these are structural and cultural traditions at schools that have presented obstacles and barriers to meaningful and substantive improvement. And we need to acknowledge those and to address them.

Educator: OK. You're sure that's all? Kevin, is that one more hiding on your paper somewhere? No? That is? OK.

Narrator: And be sure to include student voices when developing your vision.

DuFour: If we accept the notion that people who are involved in the decision-making process are more likely to have ownership in the decision and more likely to be committed to carrying it forth, then again, certainly, students ought to be engaged in the process. Perhaps in the early elementary years, this might be a difficult thing to pull off. But by middle school and high school, there's every reason to engage students in the process. With a vision statement, with the ability to describe the school you're trying to create, you then develop the capacity to identify policies and programs and procedures that can move you in that direction.

Source: From [Leadership Strategies for Principals](#) (DVD), 2007, Alexandria, VA: ASCD.



Text-Based Seminar

Developed by Gene Thompson-Grove.

Purpose

Enlargement of understanding of a text, not the achievement of some particular understanding.

Ground Rules

1. Listen actively.
2. Build on what others say.
3. Don't step on others' talk. Silences and pauses are OK.
4. Let the conversation flow as much as possible without raising hands or using a speaker's list.
5. Make the assumptions underlying your comments explicit to others.
6. Emphasize clarification, amplification, and implications of ideas.
7. Watch your own air time — both in terms of how often you speak, and in terms of how much you say when you speak.
8. Refer to the text; challenge others to go to the text.

Notes to Facilitators

Text-Based Seminars can be remarkably engaging and productive for both students and adults. A Text-Based Seminar facilitator has two primary tasks: posing the framing question and keeping the group focused without pushing any particular agenda.

Facilitating a seminar is not terribly difficult, but it can be challenging. A few tips might make the job easier:

1. Invest time in creating the framing question. It needs to be substantive, clear, relevant to the participants' experience, and likely to push their thinking in new directions. Above all, constructing a response to the question should require close reading of the text. We recommend that the framing question be genuine for everyone, including the facilitator, so that the entire group is engaged in the inquiry. Framing questions are often based on a quote from the text, which begins to establish a pattern of using the document as a basis for the conversation.
2. In addition to the framing question, create a few follow-up questions that seem to raise the level of participants' thinking. If the groups takes off, you may never use them (or you may create new ones that come from the conversation itself), but it's a good idea to have something in your hip pocket, especially if you aren't very experienced at this kind of facilitation.

3. Unless the entire group does Text-Based Seminars routinely, it is useful to go over the purposes and ground rules before you begin. Because so many conversations (in school and out) are based more on opinion than evidence, and aim toward winning the argument rather than constructing new knowledge, it is often important to remind the group of the basics: **work from the text** and **strive to enlarge your understanding**.
4. Give the group time (about 15 minutes) to re-read the text with the framing question in mind.
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Standard II Vision and Mission

Accomplished principals lead and inspire the learning community to develop, articulate, and commit to a shared and compelling vision of the highest levels of student learning and adult instructional practice. These principals advance the mission through collaborative processes that focus and drive the organization toward the vision.

Accomplished principals are visionary leaders who put students first. Central to their vision and mission is the belief that all students and adults will perform at high levels. These principals direct, guide, and empower stakeholders to prepare each student to thrive in the present and to have the skills and dispositions to shape his or her future. In the learning communities of accomplished principals, the vision and mission are more than written words; their influence is seen, heard, and felt in the classrooms, in the hallways, on the playgrounds and playing fields, and in the community.

In collaboration with stakeholders, accomplished principals lead the development of the vision and mission. They encourage the creativity and flexibility in strategies that will make improved student learning a reality. They communicate with and engage all stakeholders in a compelling manner, transforming the environment and attitude from one of compliance to one of shared commitment and shared responsibility.

Accomplished principals consistently articulate the collective vision and promote an attainable mission to advance teaching and learning, resulting in increased student performance. In doing so, they recognize ownership of the vision by all stakeholders. Employing appropriate strategic management tools, these principals fully realize stated goals and objectives related to the mission.

Accomplished principals advance the vision and the mission through

- collaborative design and development
- implementation and realization
- reflection, public learning, and recommitment
- championing the vision and mission



Collaborative Design and Development

Accomplished principals collaboratively work with stakeholders to create a shared vision and mission that is relevant and compelling to the present and the future of the organization and aligned with the district requirements. These visionary leaders inspire others to embrace their roles and responsibilities in the creation and pursuit of the vision and mission. To that end, they make certain that teachers, students, and all stakeholders, including those who are less vocal, are heard and are included in the process. Accomplished principals establish a culture in which diverse points of view are encouraged and valued in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the vision and mission. For example, these principals may hold community-based forums with subsets of stakeholders to get their input on initiatives and to engage them in the actualization of the vision and mission.

Accomplished principals communicate with both internal and external stakeholders to keep the vision in the forefront. These principals bring people into the act of determining goals, objectives, and action steps to support the mission. They incorporate input from external partners who have human, fiscal, and material resources and work collaboratively to support the learning community—including parents, faith-based groups, businesses, higher education institutions, and legislators.

Because accomplished principals realize that strong home-school connections are critical to achieving the mission, they intentionally engage parents, guardians, and community networks for direct involvement in student learning. Using traditional and non-traditional settings, these principals find creative ways to connect with stakeholders and set up opportunities to gather input from parents and from community, business, and municipal leaders. These principals continuously communicate with and engage all stakeholders about the direction required to achieve and evolve the goals of the mission. To do so, accomplished principals may use multiple mediums, such as print, digital, or in-person interactions.

Implementation and Realization

Accomplished principals ensure that the collaboratively developed mission is equitable and easily translated into actions. These principals recognize that stakeholders must be able to articulate the mission. More importantly, stakeholders must fully understand their roles and responsibilities for incorporating the mission into the culture of the learning community.

Accomplished principals understand that to be effective, a vision and a mission must be supported by a strategic implementation plan. Through ongoing training, these principals ensure that all teachers, staff members, and other stakeholders have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to execute the action steps and achieve the goals in that plan. For example, they may meet with bus drivers to make them aware of their

impact on student attitudes and behavior, and offer training and strategies, followed by ongoing dialogue and support. These principals ensure that all actions in the learning community strengthen the instructional program and are consistent with the vision and mission.

Accomplished principals identify and anticipate obstacles to the achievement of the vision and mission and work to overcome them. They capitalize on those opportunities as teachable moments, not only to refine the plan and make necessary mid-course corrections but also to enhance a culture of teamwork, cohesion, credibility, and trust.

Reflection, Public Learning and Recommitment

Accomplished principals actively and continuously monitor progress toward achievement of the vision and mission. On an ongoing basis, they collaboratively review progress related to goals and benchmark data, making necessary adjustments to the plan to keep the organization moving forward. Accomplished principals make this reflection and learning process public, approaching challenges with an attitude of inquiry. From this analysis, they incorporate the voices of stakeholders to make decisions that lead to change and improvement in student performance and teacher practices. These principals collaboratively refine goals and establish new benchmarks as the organization progresses toward achieving the mission.

Accomplished principals persistently keep stakeholders focused on the goals of the plan. They prioritize appropriately and relentlessly. These principals use time, systems, and personnel effectively, so that day-to-day distractions do not deter from the achievement of the mission and the core business of the organization. They regularly initiate professional conversations and engage in discussion to determine whether the organization—and their own practice—is on target. They share new information to empower, encourage, and enlighten stakeholders, thereby reinforcing commitment. These principals initiate discussions to encourage stakeholders to review, revise, and improve actions they take toward achieving goals. For example, after discovering from a root-cause analysis of data that students are underperforming on the writing section of a literacy test, an accomplished principal might establish an initiative through which teachers in all content areas create plans to infuse writing skills into their instruction.

Championing the Vision and Mission

As the vision keepers for their learning communities, accomplished principals garner internal and external support. They strategically identify when and how they communicate the vision and mission. These principals articulate a compelling message that communicates the vision for the present and the future of the learning community. Their messages paint a clear picture of the values and beliefs embodied in the culture of the learning community and communicate a sense of focus and urgency. The messages



Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015

STANDARD 1. MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES

Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.

Effective leaders:

- a) Develop an educational mission for the school to promote the academic success and well-being of each student.
- b) In collaboration with members of the school and the community and using relevant data, develop and promote a vision for the school on the successful learning and development of each child and on instructional and organizational practices that promote such success.
- c) Articulate, advocate, and cultivate core values that define the school's culture and stress the imperative of child-centered education; high expectations and student support; equity, inclusiveness, and social justice; openness, caring, and trust; and continuous improvement.
- d) Strategically develop, implement, and evaluate actions to achieve the vision for the school.
- e) Review the school's mission and vision and adjust them to changing expectations and opportunities for the school, and changing needs and situations of students.
- f) Develop shared understanding of and commitment to mission, vision, and core values within the school and the community.
- g) Model and pursue the school's mission, vision, and core values in all aspects of leadership.

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4. Give the group time (about 15 minutes) to re-read the text with the framing question in mind.
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Affinity Mapping

This revision and description by Ross Peterson-Veach, Instructional Consulting, Indiana University Kelley School of Business, 2006.

Description

This activity works best when begun with an open-ended analytic question that asks for defining elements of something, or that has many answers and thereby provides many points of entry for deepening a conversation.

Ex. What is the purpose of discussion? Or, perhaps: What do you need to be able to contribute to discussions?

Preparation

Hang pieces of chart paper on a wall in the room so that small groups can gather around the paper. Hand out to every participant a “block” of post-it notes (perhaps 5-10 maximum).

Step 1

Ask the question and request that participants write one idea in response per post-it note. Instruct them to work silently on their own.

Step 2

Split into groups (of 4-8). In *silence*, put all post-it notes on the chart paper.

Step 3

Reminding participants to remain silent, have them organize ideas by “natural” categories. Directions might sound like this:

“Which ideas go together? As long as you do not talk, feel free to move any post-it note to any place. Move yours, and those of others, and feel free to do this. Do not be offended if someone moves yours to a place that you think it does not belong, just move it to where you think it does belong — but do this all in silence.”

Step 4

Once groups have settled on categories, have them place post-it notes on chart paper in neat columns. At this point, ask them to converse about the categories and come up with a name for each one.

Step 5

Have the groups pick a “spokesperson” to report their ideas to the larger group.

Gather that data, and have an open discussion using questions such as the following to help participants make connections between each groups’ responses and categories:

1. What themes emerged? Were there any surprises?
2. What dimensions are missing from our “maps”? Again, any surprises?
3. How did this expand your knowledge or your notion of what the question at the beginning asked you to consider?



Action-Based Conversations:

Facilitator’s Guide to Exploring Accomplished Practice in Leadership

Core Prop 3: Accomplished educational leaders manage and leverage systems and processes to achieve desired results. *(Standard 6: Strategic Management)*

Title: Managing Systems

Brief Description: Educational leaders find themselves pulled in innumerable directions during their work. Participants will explore the definition of leadership and the various forms it can take within an organization.

“Because of the complexity of the work, accomplished principals build leadership capacity in others and share leadership responsibility. Understand the diverse strengths of students, teachers, staff, parents, and community members, accomplished principals enlist them to serve in leadership roles. ...accomplished principals distribute leadership as they engage others in authentic processes designed to involve the perspectives and talents of many, including other members of their administrative team, teacher leaders, staff, and parents.”

Protocols Included: Jigsaw, Key Concepts Key Ideas

Objectives
Participants will identify their definition of leadership and explore the ways that leadership can develop within an organization.
Participants will develop an understanding of how internal systems can impact student outcomes positively.

Length/Timing: 90 Minutes

Materials or Special Setup Required:

Chart paper, Post-It notes, highlighters, enough copies of **The Bell Curve** (Atul Gwande) and chapter 8 from **Schools That Succeed: How Educators Marshall the Power of Systems for Improvement** (Karin Chenoweth) for all participants.

Process:	Notes
Introductions, Norms, and Agenda	~5 min
Opening Activity - What is a learning organization? Brief discussion about people’s understanding of what a learning organization is.	~5 Min
- Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40meQNZI3KU	~4 Min
Discussion of video	~6 Min
Jigsaw Activity - Divide participants into two groups.	~ 25 min
• The Bell Curve (Atul Gwande) and	



Accomplished Leadership Series

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chapter 8 from <i>Schools That Succeed: How Educators Marshal the Power of Systems for Improvement</i> (Karin Chenoweth) <p>Distribute each reading to half of the group. Ask participants to read their assigned reading.</p> <p>When complete, participants collaborate on a shared poster which summarizes their understanding of their reading and how it maps to the Architecture of Accomplished Leadership (pg 67).</p>	~20 min
<p>Adding to your Poster: Key Concepts; Key Ideas</p> <p>Read NB Standard 6 (pgs 51-54) Participants will highlight words or short phrases that capture important or interesting ideas that relate to their poster.</p>	~7 min
<p>Once finished they will take turns discussing the highlighted words/phrases and adding to their poster collectively.</p>	~8 min
<p>Gallery Walk and Share Out: Participants will stop and review each poster, adding feedback or thinking.</p>	~10 min
<p>Exit Ticket/Closing: What changed the most in your thinking about systems after today's conversation?</p>	

Source(s):

Chenoweth, K. (2017). Chapter 8: Marshaling the Power of Schools. In *Schools that Succeed: How Educators Marshal the Power of Systems for Improvement* (pp. 179–204). Harvard Education Press.

Gawande, A. (2017, June 18). The Health-Care Bell Curve. *The New Yorker*.
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2004/12/06/the-bell-curve>

National Board Accomplished Principal Standards. (2013). National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

National Policy Board for Educational Administration. (2015). *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders*. NPBEA.Org.
https://www.npbea.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Professional-Standards-for-Educational-Leaders_2015.pdf

Sprouts. (2017, March 23). *The Learning Organization: Is Your Company Ready for the Future?* YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40meQNZI3KU>

Activity documented by: Christopher Chank, NBCT and Colleen McDonald, NBCT



Accomplished Leadership Series

Elevating the Profession through Leadership: A New Professional Learning Series

LOCATION: DATE

NATIONAL BOARD
OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS

National Board Core Propositions
for Accomplished Educational Leaders™

NT3

1

Agenda:

- Introductions, Norms, Agenda
- What is a Learning Organization?
 - Video and Discussion
- Jigsaw Articles
- Creating a Poster
- Key Concepts, Key Ideas
 - Adding the Standard
- Gallery Walk
- Exit Ticket and Closing



Accomplished Leadership Series

2

Norms:

- **Equity:** Mind your own airtime. Speak up or scale back as needed.
- **Respect:** Assume the best of intentions. Seek to understand. Then strive to be understood.
- **Community:** Be vulnerable and authentic. Take risks. Trust that the wisdom is in the room.
- **Growth:** Be solutions oriented. Own your own learning. Challenge each other. Provide processing time for this complex work.
- **Results:** Stay grounded in the task. Maintain focus with high engagement and low technology. Take necessary moments outside the room. Maintain a parking lot, and always identify next steps.
- **Bring levity!**



Accomplished Leadership Series

3

Purpose: This series is designed for building leaders. This professional learning opportunity will provide rich, deep, collaborative conversations to allow the personal and professional exploration of accomplished practice in leadership.

Essential Questions:

- What does accomplished leadership look like and sound like, in your context, with your population?
- How is equity ensured?
- How is student and adult learning managed and monitored?
- How are collaborative partnerships built with families, stakeholders, and communities?



4

What is a learning organization?

Discussion



5

sprouts



LEARNING ORGANIZATIONS



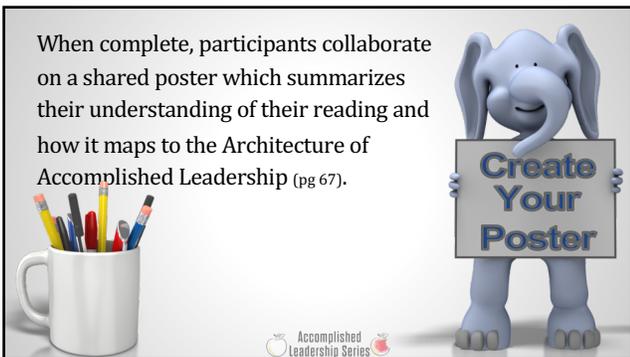
6



7



8



9

Key Concepts, Key Ideas

Read NB Standard 6 (pgs 51-54)
Participants will highlight words or short phrases that capture important or interesting ideas that relate to their poster.



Accomplished Leadership Series

10

Adding to your poster



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11

Stop and review each poster, adding feedback or thinking.

or thinking



Accomplished Leadership Series

12

What changed the most in your thinking about systems after today's conversation?



13

FUTURE DATES:



14

Facilitators:

Name
Email

Resources:
www.accomplishedteachingny.org
nbpts.org



15

The Bell Curve

What happens when patients find out how good their doctors really are?

By [Atul Gawande](#)



Doctors like to think they're doing their job as well as it can be done. But when you measure their results the spread is wide.

Illustration by Christoph Niemann

Every illness is a story, and Annie Page's began with the kinds of small, unexceptional details that mean nothing until seen in hindsight. Like the fact that, when she was a baby, her father sometimes called her Little Potato Chip, because her skin tasted salty when he kissed her. Or that Annie's mother noticed that her breathing was sometimes a little wheezy, though the pediatrician heard nothing through his stethoscope.

The detail that finally mattered was Annie's size. For a while, Annie's fine-boned petiteness seemed to be just a family trait. Her sister, Lauryn, four years older, had always been at the bottom end of the pediatrician's growth chart for girls her age. By the time Annie was three years old, however, she had fallen off the chart. She stood an acceptable thirty-four inches tall but weighed only twenty-three pounds—less than ninety-eight per cent of girls her age. She did not look malnourished, but she didn't look quite healthy, either.

“Failure to thrive” is what it's called, and there can be scores of explanations: pituitary disorders, hypothyroidism, genetic defects in metabolism, inflammatory bowel disease, lead poisoning, H.I.V., tapeworm infection. In textbooks, the complete list is at least a page long. Annie's doctor did a thorough workup. Then, at four o'clock on July 27, 1997—“I'll never forget that day,” her mother, Honor, says—the pediatrician called the Pages at home with the results of a sweat test.

It's a strange little test. The skin on the inside surface of a child's forearm is cleaned and dried. Two small gauze pads are applied—one soaked with pilocarpine, a medicine that makes skin sweat, and the other with a salt solution. Electrodes are hooked up. Then a mild electric current is turned on for five minutes, driving the pilocarpine into the skin. A reddened, sweaty area about an inch in diameter appears on the skin, and a collection pad of dry filter paper is taped over it to absorb the sweat for half an hour. A technician then measures the concentration of chloride in the pad.

Over the phone, the doctor told Honor that her daughter's chloride level was far higher than normal. Honor is a hospital pharmacist, and she had come across children with abnormal results like this. "All I knew was that it meant she was going to die," she said quietly when I visited the Pages' home, in the Cincinnati suburb of Loveland. The test showed that Annie had cystic fibrosis.

Cystic fibrosis is a genetic disease. Only a thousand American children per year are diagnosed as having it. Some ten million people in the United States carry the defective gene, but the disorder is recessive: a child will develop the condition only if both parents are carriers and both pass on a copy. The gene—which was discovered, in 1989, sitting out on the long arm of chromosome No. 7—produces a mutant protein that interferes with cells' ability to manage chloride. This is what makes sweat from people with CF so salty. (Salt is sodium chloride, after all.) The chloride defect thickens secretions throughout the body, turning them dry and gluey. In the ducts of the pancreas, the flow of digestive enzymes becomes blocked, making a child less and less able to absorb food. This was why Annie had all but stopped growing. The effects on the lungs, however, are what make the disease lethal. Thickened mucus slowly fills the small airways and hardens, shrinking lung capacity. Over time, the disease leaves a child with the equivalent of just one functioning lung. Then half a lung. Then none at all.

The one overwhelming thought in the minds of Honor and Don Page was: We need to get to Children's. Cincinnati Children's Hospital is among the most respected pediatric hospitals in the country. It was where Albert Sabin invented the oral polio vaccine. The chapter on cystic fibrosis in the "Nelson Textbook of Pediatrics"—the bible of the specialty—was written by one of the hospital's pediatricians. The Pages called and were given an appointment for the next morning.

"We were there for hours, meeting with all the different members of the team," Honor recalled. "They took Annie's blood pressure, measured her oxygen saturation, did some other tests. Then they put us in a room, and the pediatrician sat down with us. He was very kind, but frank, too. He said, 'Do you understand it's a genetic disease? That it's nothing you did, nothing you can catch?' He told us the median survival for patients was thirty years. In Annie's lifetime, he said, we could see that go to forty. For him, he was sharing a great accomplishment in CF care. And the news was better than our worst fears. But only forty! That's not what we wanted to hear."

The team members reviewed the treatments. The Pages were told that they would have to give Annie pancreatic-enzyme pills with the first bite of every meal. They would have to give her supplemental vitamins. They also had to add calories wherever they could—putting tablespoons of butter on everything, giving her ice cream whenever she wanted, and then putting chocolate sauce on it.

A respiratory therapist explained that they would need to do manual chest therapy at least twice a day, half-hour sessions in which they would strike—"percuss"—their daughter's torso with a cupped hand at each of fourteen specific locations on the front, back, and sides in order to loosen the thick secretions and help her to cough them up. They were given prescriptions for inhaled medicines. The doctor told them that Annie would need to come back once every three months for extended checkups. And then they went home to start their new life. They had been told almost everything they needed to know in order to give Annie her best chance to live as long as possible.

The one thing that the clinicians failed to tell them, however, was that Cincinnati Children's was not, as the Pages supposed, among the country's best centers for children with cystic fibrosis. According to data from that year, it was, at best, an average program. This was no small matter. In 1997, patients at an average center were living to be just over thirty years old; patients at the top center typically lived to be forty-six. By some measures, Cincinnati was well below average. The best predictor of a CF patient's life expectancy is his or her lung function. At Cincinnati, lung function for patients under the age of twelve—children like Annie—was in the bottom twenty-five per cent of the country's CF patients. And the doctors there knew it.

It used to be assumed that differences among hospitals or doctors in a particular specialty were generally insignificant. If you plotted a graph showing the results of all the centers treating cystic fibrosis—or any other disease, for that matter—people expected that the curve would look something like a shark fin, with most places clustered around the very best outcomes. But the evidence has begun to indicate otherwise. What you tend to find is a bell curve: a handful of teams with disturbingly poor outcomes for their patients, a handful with remarkably good results, and a great undistinguished middle.

In ordinary hernia operations, the chances of recurrence are one in ten for surgeons at the unhappy end of the spectrum, one in twenty for those in the middle majority, and under one in five hundred for a handful. A Scottish study of patients with treatable colon cancer found that the ten-year survival rate ranged from a high of sixty-three per cent to a low of twenty per cent, depending on the surgeon. For heart bypass patients, even at hospitals with a good volume of experience, risk-adjusted death rates in New York vary from five per cent to under one per cent—and only a very few hospitals are down near the one-per-cent mortality rate.

It is distressing for doctors to have to acknowledge the bell curve. It belies the promise that we make to patients who become seriously ill: that they can count on the medical system to give them their very best chance at life. It also contradicts the belief nearly all of us have that we are doing our job as well as it can be done. But evidence of the bell curve is starting to trickle out, to doctors and patients alike, and we are only beginning to find out what happens when it does.

In medicine, we are used to confronting failure; all doctors have unforeseen deaths and complications. What we're not used to is comparing our records of success and failure with those of our peers. I am a surgeon in a department that is, our members like to believe, one of the best in the country. But the truth is that we have had no reliable evidence about whether we're as good as we think we are. Baseball teams have win-loss records. Businesses have quarterly earnings reports. What about doctors?

There is a company on the Web called HealthGrades, which for \$7.95 will give you a report card on any physician you choose. Recently, I requested the company's report cards on me and several of my colleagues. They don't tell you that much. You will learn, for instance, that I am in fact certified in my specialty, have no criminal convictions, have not been fired from any hospital, have not had my license suspended or revoked, and have not been disciplined. This is no doubt useful to know. But it sets the bar a tad low, doesn't it?

In recent years, there have been numerous efforts to measure how various hospitals and doctors perform. No one has found the task easy. One difficulty has been figuring out what to measure. For six years, from 1986 to 1992, the federal government released an annual report that came to be known as the Death List, which ranked all the hospitals in the country by their death rate for elderly and disabled patients on Medicare. The spread was alarmingly wide, and the Death List made headlines the first year it came out. But the rankings proved to be almost useless. Death among the elderly or disabled mostly has to do with how old or sick they are to begin with, and the statisticians could never quite work out how to apportion blame between nature and doctors. Volatility in the numbers was one sign of the trouble. Hospitals' rankings varied widely from one year to the next based on a handful of random deaths. It was unclear what kind of changes would improve their performance (other than sending their sickest patients to other hospitals). Pretty soon the public simply ignored the rankings.

Even with younger patients, death rates are a poor metric for how doctors do. After all, very few young patients die, and when they do it's rarely a surprise; most already have metastatic cancer or horrendous injuries or the like. What one really wants to know is how we perform in typical circumstances. After I've done an appendectomy, how long does it take for my patients to fully recover? After I've taken out a thyroid cancer, how often do my patients have serious avoidable complications? How do my results compare with those of other surgeons?

Getting this kind of data can be difficult. Medicine still relies heavily on paper records, so to collect information you have to send people to either scour the charts or track the patients themselves, both of which are expensive and laborious propositions. Recent privacy regulations have made the task still harder. Yet it is being done. The country's veterans' hospitals have all now brought in staff who do nothing but record and compare surgeons' complication rates and death rates. Fourteen teaching hospitals, including my own, have recently joined together to do the same. California, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania have been collecting and reporting data on every cardiac surgeon in their states for several years.

One small field in medicine has been far ahead of most others in measuring the performance of its practitioners: cystic-fibrosis care. For forty years, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation has gathered detailed data from the country's cystic-fibrosis treatment centers. It did not begin doing so because it was more enlightened than everyone else. It did so because, in the nineteen-sixties, a pediatrician from Cleveland named LeRoy Matthews was driving people in the field crazy.

Matthews had started a cystic-fibrosis treatment program as a young pulmonary specialist at Babies and Children's Hospital, in Cleveland, in 1957, and within a few years was claiming to have an annual mortality rate that was less than two per cent. To anyone treating CF at the time, it was a preposterous assertion. National mortality rates for the disease were estimated to be higher than twenty per cent a year, and the average patient died by the age of three. Yet here was Matthews saying that he and his colleagues could stop the disease from doing serious harm for years. "How long [our patients] will live remains to be seen, but I expect most of them to come to my funeral," he told one conference of physicians.

In 1964, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation gave a University of Minnesota pediatrician named Warren Warwick a budget of ten thousand dollars to collect reports on every patient treated at the thirty-one CF centers in the United States that year—data that would test Matthews's claim. Several months later, he had the results: the median estimated age at death for patients in Matthews's center was twenty-one years, seven times the age of patients treated elsewhere. He had not had a single death among patients younger than six in at least five years.

Unlike pediatricians elsewhere, Matthews viewed CF as a cumulative disease and provided aggressive treatment long before his patients became sick. He made his patients sleep each night in a plastic tent filled with a continuous, aerosolized water mist so dense you could barely see through it. This thinned the tenacious mucus that clogged their airways and enabled them to cough it up. Like British pediatricians, he also had family members clap on the children's chests daily to help loosen the mucus. After Warwick's report came out, Matthews's treatment quickly became the standard in this country. The American Thoracic Society endorsed his approach, and Warwick's data registry on treatment centers proved to be so useful that the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation has continued it ever since.

Looking at the data over time is both fascinating and disturbing. By 1966, mortality from CF nationally had dropped so much that the average life expectancy of CF patients had already reached ten years. By 1972, it was eighteen years—a rapid and remarkable transformation. At the same time, though, Matthews's center had got even better. The foundation has never identified individual centers in its data; to insure participation, it has guaranteed anonymity. But Matthews's center published its results. By the early nineteen-seventies, ninety-five per cent of patients who had gone there before severe lung disease set in were living past their eighteenth birthday. There was a bell curve, and the spread had narrowed a little. Yet every time the average moved up Matthews and a few others somehow managed to stay ahead of the pack. In 2003, life expectancy with CF had risen to thirty-three years nationally, but at the best center it was more than forty-seven. Experts have become as leery of life-expectancy calculations as they are of hospital death rates, but other measures tell the same story. For example, at the median center, lung function for patients with CF—the best predictor of survival—is about three-quarters of what it is for people without CF. At the top centers, the average lung function of patients is indistinguishable from that of children who do not have CF.

What makes the situation especially puzzling is that our system for CF care is far more sophisticated than that for most diseases. The hundred and seventeen CF centers across the country are all ultra-specialized, undergo a rigorous certification process, and have lots of experience in caring for people with CF. They all follow the same detailed guidelines for CF treatment. They all participate in research trials to figure out new and better treatments. You would think, therefore, that their results would be much the same. Yet the differences are enormous. Patients have not known this. So what happens when they find out?

In the winter of 2001, the Pages and twenty other families were invited by their doctors at Cincinnati Children's to a meeting about the CF program there. Annie was seven years old now, a lively, brown-haired second grader. She was still not growing enough, and a simple cold could be hellish for her, but her lung function had been stable. The families gathered in a large conference room at the hospital. After a brief introduction, the doctors started flashing PowerPoint slides on a screen: here is how the top programs do on nutrition and respiratory performance, and here is how Cincinnati does. It was a kind of experiment in openness. The doctors were nervous. Some were opposed to having the meeting at all. But hospital leaders had insisted on going ahead. The reason was Don Berwick.

Berwick runs a small, nonprofit organization in Boston called the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. The institute provided multimillion-dollar grants to hospitals that were willing to try his ideas for improving medicine. Cincinnati's CF program won one of the grants. And among Berwick's key stipulations was that recipients had to open up their information to their patients—to "go naked," as one doctor put it.

Berwick, a former pediatrician, is an unusual figure in medicine. In 2002, the industry publication *Modern Healthcare* listed him as the third most powerful person in American health care. Unlike the others on the list, he is powerful not because of the position he holds. (The Secretary of Health and Human Services, Tommy Thompson, was No. 1, and the head of Medicare and Medicaid was No. 2.) He is powerful because of how he thinks.

In December, 1999, at a health-care conference, Berwick gave a forty-minute speech distilling his ideas about the failings of American health care. Five years on, people are still talking about the speech. The video of it circulated like samizdat. (That was how I saw it: on a grainy, overplayed tape, about a year later.) A booklet with the transcript was sent to thousands of doctors around the country. Berwick is middle-aged, soft-spoken, and unprepossessing, and he knows how to use his apparent ordinariness to his advantage. He began his speech with a gripping story about a 1949 Montana forest fire that engulfed a parachute brigade of firefighters. Panicking, they ran, trying to make it up a seventy-six-per-cent grade and over a crest to safety. But their commander, a man named Wag Dodge, saw that it wasn't going to work. So he stopped, took out some matches, and set the tall dry grass ahead of him on fire. The new blaze caught and rapidly spread up the slope. He stepped into the middle of the burned-out area it left behind, lay down, and called out to his crew to join him. He had invented what came to be called an "escape fire," and it later became a standard part of Forest Service fire training. His men, however, either thought he was crazy or never heard his calls, and they ran past him. All but two were caught by the inferno and perished. Inside his escape fire, Dodge survived virtually unharmed.

As Berwick explained, the organization had unraveled. The men had lost their ability to think coherently, to act together, to recognize that a lifesaving idea might be possible. This is what happens to all flawed organizations in a disaster, and, he argued, that's what is happening in modern health care. To fix medicine, Berwick maintained, we need to do two things: measure ourselves and be more open about what we are doing. This meant routinely comparing the performance of doctors and hospitals, looking at everything from complication rates to how often a drug ordered for a patient is delivered correctly and on time. And, he insisted, hospitals should give patients total access to the information. " 'No secrets' is the new rule in my escape fire," he said. He argued that openness would drive improvement, if simply through embarrassment. It would make it clear that the well-being and convenience of patients, not doctors, were paramount. It would also serve a fundamental moral good, because people should be able to learn about anything that affects their lives.

Berwick's institute was given serious money from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to offer those who used his ideas. And so the doctors, nurses, and social workers of Cincinnati Children's stood uncertainly before a crowd of patients' families in that hospital conference room, told them how poorly the program's results ranked, and announced a plan for doing better. Surprisingly, not a single family chose to leave the program.

“We thought about it after that meeting,” Ralph Blackwelder told me. He and his wife, Tracey, have eight children, four of whom have CF. “We thought maybe we should move. We could sell my business here and start a business somewhere else. We were thinking, Why would I want my kids to be seen here, with inferior care? I want the very best people to be helping my children.” But he and Tracey were impressed that the team had told them the truth. No one at Cincinnati Children’s had made any excuses, and everyone appeared desperate to do better. The Blackwelders had known these people for years. The program’s nutritionist, Terri Schindler, had a child of her own in the program. Their pulmonary specialist, Barbara Chini, had been smart, attentive, loving—taking their late-night phone calls, seeing the children through terrible crises, instituting new therapies as they became available. The program director, Jim Acton, made a personal promise that there would soon be no better treatment center in the world.

Honor Page was alarmed when she saw the numbers. Like the Blackwelders, the Pages had a close relationship with the team at Children’s, but the news tested their loyalty. Acton announced the formation of several committees that would work to improve the program’s results. Each committee, he said, had to have at least one parent on it. This is unusual; hospitals seldom allow patients and families on internal-review committees. So, rather than walk away, Honor decided to sign up for the committee that would reexamine the science behind patients’ care.

Her committee was puzzled that the center’s results were not better. Not only had the center followed national guidelines for CF; two of its physicians had helped write them. They wanted to visit the top centers, but no one knew which those were. Although the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation’s annual reports displayed the individual results for each of the country’s hundred and seventeen centers, no names were attached. Doctors put in a call and sent e-mails to the foundation, asking for the names of the top five, but to no avail.

Several months later, in early 2002, Don Berwick visited the Cincinnati program. He was impressed by its seriousness, and by the intense involvement of the families, but he was incredulous when he learned that the committee couldn’t get the names of the top programs from the foundation. He called the foundation’s executive vice-president for medical affairs, Preston Campbell. “I was probably a bit self-righteous,” Berwick says. “I said, ‘How could you do this?’ And he said, ‘You don’t understand our world.’ ” This was the first Campbell had heard about the requests, and he reacted with instinctive caution. The centers, he tried to explain, give their data voluntarily. The reason they have done so for forty years is that they have trusted that it would be kept confidential. Once the centers lost that faith, they might no longer report solid, honest information tracking how different treatments are working, how many patients there are, and how well they do.

Campbell is a deliberate and thoughtful man, a pediatric pulmonologist who has devoted his career to cystic-fibrosis patients. The discussion with Berwick had left him uneasy. The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation had always been dedicated to the value of research; by investing in bench science, it had helped decode the gene for cystic fibrosis, produce two new drugs approved for patients, and generate more than a dozen other drugs that are currently being tested. Its investments in tracking patient care had produced scores of valuable studies. But what do you do when the research shows that patients are getting care of widely different quality?

A couple of weeks after Berwick's phone call, Campbell released the names of the top five centers to Cincinnati. The episode convinced Campbell and others in the foundation that they needed to join the drive toward greater transparency, rather than just react. The foundation announced a goal of making the outcomes of every center publicly available. But it has yet to come close to doing so. It's a measure of the discomfort with this issue in the cystic-fibrosis world that Campbell asked me not to print the names of the top five. "We're not ready," he says. "It'd be throwing grease on the slope." So far, only a few of the nation's CF treatment centers are committed to going public.

Still, after travelling to one of the top five centers for a look, I found I could not avoid naming the center I saw—no obscuring physicians' identities or glossing over details. There was simply no way to explain what a great center did without the particulars. The people from Cincinnati found this, too. Within months of learning which the top five centers were, they'd spoken to each and then visited what they considered to be the very best one, the Minnesota Cystic Fibrosis Center, at Fairview-University Children's Hospital, in Minneapolis. I went first to Cincinnati, and then to Minneapolis for comparison.

What I saw in Cincinnati both impressed me and, given its ranking, surprised me. The CF staff was skilled, energetic, and dedicated. They had just completed a flu-vaccination campaign that had reached more than ninety per cent of their patients. Patients were being sent questionnaires before their clinic visits so that the team would be better prepared for the questions they would have and the services (such as X-rays, tests, and specialist consultations) they would need. Before patients went home, the doctors gave them a written summary of their visit and a complete copy of their record, something that I had never thought to do in my own practice.

I joined Cori Daines, one of the seven CF-care specialists, in her clinic one morning. Among the patients we saw was Alyssa. She was fifteen years old, freckled, skinny, with nails painted loud red, straight sandy-blond hair tied in a ponytail, a soda in one hand, legs crossed, foot bouncing constantly. Every few minutes, she gave a short, throaty cough. Her parents sat to one side. All the questions were directed to her. How had she been doing? How was school going? Any breathing difficulties? Trouble keeping up with her calories? Her answers were monosyllabic at first. But Daines had known Alyssa for years, and slowly she opened up. Things had mostly been going all right, she said. She had been sticking with her treatment regimen—twice-a-day manual chest therapy by one of her parents, inhaled medications using a nebulizer immediately afterward, and vitamins. Her lung function had been measured that morning, and it was sixty-seven per cent of normal—slightly down from her usual eighty per cent. Her cough had got a little worse the day before, and this was thought to be the reason for the dip. Daines was concerned about stomach pains that Alyssa had been having for several months. The pains came on unpredictably, Alyssa said—before meals, after meals, in the middle of the night. They were sharp, and persisted for up to a couple of hours. Examinations, tests, and X-rays had found no abnormalities, but she'd stayed home from school for the past five weeks. Her parents, exasperated because she seemed fine most of the time, wondered if the pain could be just in her head. Daines wasn't sure. She asked a staff nurse to check in with Alyssa at home, arranged for a consultation with a gastroenterologist and with a pain specialist, and scheduled an earlier return visit than the usual three months.

This was, it seemed to me, real medicine: untidy, human, but practiced carefully and conscientiously—as well as anyone could ask for. Then I went to Minneapolis.

The director of Fairview-University Children's Hospital's cystic-fibrosis center for almost forty years has been none other than Warren Warwick, the pediatrician who had conducted the study of LeRoy Matthews's suspiciously high success rate. Ever since then, Warwick has made a study of what it takes to do better than everyone else. The secret, he insists, is simple, and he learned it from Matthews: you do whatever you can to keep your patients' lungs as open as possible. Patients with CF at Fairview got the same things that patients everywhere did—some nebulized treatments to loosen secretions and unclog passageways (a kind of mist tent in a mouth pipe), antibiotics, and a good thumping on their chests every day. Yet, somehow, everything he did was different.

In the clinic one afternoon, I joined him as he saw a seventeen-year-old high-school senior named Janelle, who had been diagnosed with CF at the age of six and had been under his care ever since. She had come for her routine three-month checkup. She wore dyed-black hair to her shoulder blades, black Avril Lavigne eyeliner, four earrings in each ear, two more in an eyebrow, and a stud in her tongue. Warwick is seventy-six years old, tall, stooped, and frumpy-looking, with a well-worn tweed jacket, liver spots dotting his skin, wispy gray hair—by all appearances, a doddering, mid-century academic. He stood in front of Janelle for a moment, hands on his hips, looking her over, and then he said, "So, Janelle, what have you been doing to make us the best CF program in the country?"

“It’s not easy, you know,” she said.

They bantered. She was doing fine. School was going well. Warwick pulled out her latest lung-function measurements. There’d been a slight dip, as there was with Alyssa. Three months earlier, Janelle had been at a hundred and nine per cent (she was actually doing better than normal); now she was at around ninety per cent. Ninety per cent was still pretty good, and some ups and downs in the numbers are to be expected. But this was not the way Warwick saw the results.

He knitted his eyebrows. “Why did they go down?” he asked.

Janelle shrugged.

Any cough lately? No. Colds? No. Fevers? No. Was she sure she’d been taking her treatments regularly? Yes, of course. Every day? Yes. Did she ever miss treatments? Sure. Everyone does once in a while. How often is once in a while?

Then, slowly, Warwick got a different story out of her: in the past few months, it turned out, she’d barely been taking her treatments at all.

He pressed on. “Why aren’t you taking your treatments?” He appeared neither surprised nor angry. He seemed genuinely curious, as if he’d never run across this interesting situation before.

“I don’t know.”

He kept pushing. “What keeps you from doing your treatments?”

“I don’t know.”

“Up here”—he pointed at his own head—“what’s going on?”

“*I don’t know,*” she said.

He paused for a moment. And then he began speaking to me, taking a new tack. “The thing about patients with CF is that they’re good scientists,” he said. “They always experiment. We have to help them interpret what they experience as they experiment. So they stop doing their treatments. And what happens? *They don’t get sick.* Therefore, they conclude, Dr. Warwick is nuts.”

“Let’s look at the numbers,” he said to me, ignoring Janelle. He went to a little blackboard he had on the wall. It appeared to be well used. “A person’s daily risk of getting a bad lung illness with CF is 0.5 per cent.” He wrote the number down. Janelle rolled her eyes. She began tapping her foot. “The daily risk of getting a bad lung illness with CF *plus treatment* is 0.05 per cent,” he went on, and he wrote that number down. “So when you experiment you’re looking at the difference between a 99.95-per-cent chance of staying well and a 99.5-per-cent chance of staying well. Seems hardly any difference, right? On any given day, you have basically a one-hundred-per-cent chance of being well. But”—he paused and took a step toward me—“it is a *big* difference.” He chalked out the calculations. “Sum it up over a year, and it is the difference between an eighty-three-per-cent chance of making it through 2004 without getting sick and only a sixteen-per-cent chance.”

He turned to Janelle. “How do you stay well all your life? How do you become a geriatric patient?” he asked her. Her foot finally stopped tapping. “I can’t promise you anything. I can only tell you the odds.”

In this short speech was the core of Warwick’s world view. He believed that excellence came from seeing, on a daily basis, the difference between being 99.5-per-cent successful and being 99.95-per-cent successful. Many activities are like that, of course: catching fly balls, manufacturing microchips, delivering overnight packages. Medicine’s only distinction is that lives are lost in those slim margins.

And so he went to work on finding that margin for Janelle. Eventually, he figured out that she had a new boyfriend. She had a new job, too, and was working nights. The boyfriend had his own apartment, and she was either there or at a friend’s house most of the time, so she rarely made it home to take her treatments. At school, new rules required her to go to the school nurse for each dose of medicine during the day. So she skipped going. “It’s such a pain,” she said. He learned that there were some medicines she took and some she didn’t. One she took because it was the only thing that she felt actually made a difference. She took her vitamins, too. (“Why your vitamins?” “Because they’re cool.”) The rest she ignored.

Warwick proposed a deal. Janelle would go home for a breathing treatment every day after school, and get her best friend to hold her to it. She’d also keep key medications in her bag or her pocket at school and take them on her own. (“The nurse won’t let me.” “Don’t tell her,” he said, and deftly turned taking care of herself into an act of rebellion.) So far, Janelle was O.K. with this. But there was one other thing, he said: she’d have to come to the hospital for a few days of therapy to recover the lost ground. She stared at him.

“Today?”

“Yes, today.”

“How about tomorrow?”

“We’ve failed, Janelle,” he said. “It’s important to acknowledge when we’ve failed.”

With that, she began to cry.

Warwick’s combination of focus, aggressiveness, and inventiveness is what makes him extraordinary. He thinks hard about his patients, he pushes them, and he does not hesitate to improvise. Twenty years ago, while he was listening to a church choir and mulling over how he might examine his patients better, he came up with a new stethoscope—a stereo-stethoscope, he calls it. It has two bells dangling from it, and, because of a built-in sound delay, transmits lung sounds in stereo. He had an engineer make it for him. Listening to Janelle with the instrument, he put one bell on the right side of her chest and the other on her left side, and insisted that he could systematically localize how individual lobes of her lungs sounded.

He invented a new cough. It wasn’t enough that his patients actively cough up their sputum. He wanted a deeper, better cough, and later, in his office, Warwick made another patient practice his cough. The patient stretched his arms upward, yawned, pinched his nose, bent down as far as he could, let the pressure build up, and then, straightening, blasted everything out. (“Again!” Warwick encouraged him. “Harder!”)

He produced his most far-reaching invention almost two decades ago—a mechanized, chest-thumping vest for patients to wear. The chief difficulty for people with CF is sticking with the laborious daily regimen of care, particularly the manual chest therapy. It requires another person’s help. It requires conscientiousness, making sure to bang on each of the fourteen locations on a patient’s chest. And it requires consistency, doing this twice a day, every day, year after year. Warwick had become fascinated by studies showing that inflating and deflating a blood-pressure cuff around a dog’s chest could mobilize its lung secretions, and in the mid-nineteen-eighties he created what is now known as the Vest. It looks like a black flak jacket with two vacuum hoses coming out of the sides. These are hooked up to a compressor that shoots quick blasts of air in and out of the vest at high frequencies. (I talked to a patient while he had one of these on. He vibrated like a car on a back road.) Studies eventually showed that Warwick’s device was at least as effective as manual chest therapy, and was used far more consistently. Today, forty-five thousand patients with CF and other lung diseases use the technology.

Like most medical clinics, the Minnesota Cystic Fibrosis Center has several physicians and many more staff members. Warwick established a weekly meeting to review everyone's care for their patients, and he insists on a degree of uniformity that clinicians usually find intolerable. Some chafe. He can have, as one of the doctors put it, "somewhat of an absence of, um, collegial respect for different care plans." And although he stepped down as director of the center in 1999, to let a protégé, Carlos Milla, take over, he remains its guiding spirit. He and his colleagues aren't content if their patients' lung function is eighty per cent of normal, or even ninety per cent. They aim for a hundred per cent—or better. Almost ten per cent of the children at his center get supplemental feedings through a latex tube surgically inserted into their stomachs, simply because, by Warwick's standards, they were not gaining enough weight. There's no published research showing that you need to do this. But not a single child or teenager at the center has died in years. Its oldest patient is now sixty-four.

The buzzword for clinicians these days is "evidence-based practice"—good doctors are supposed to follow research findings rather than their own intuition or ad-hoc experimentation. Yet Warwick is almost contemptuous of established findings. National clinical guidelines for care are, he says, "a record of the past, and little more—they should have an expiration date." I accompanied him as he visited another of his patients, Scott Pieper. When Pieper came to Fairview, at the age of thirty-two, he had lost at least eighty per cent of his lung capacity. He was too weak and short of breath to take a walk, let alone work, and he wasn't expected to last a year. That was fourteen years ago.

"Some days, I think, This is it—I'm not going to make it," Pieper told me. "But other times I think, I'm going to make sixty, seventy, maybe more." For the past several months, Warwick had Pieper trying a new idea—wearing his vest not only for two daily thirty-minute sessions but also while napping for two hours in the middle of the day. Falling asleep in that shuddering thing took some getting used to. But Pieper was soon able to take up bowling, his first regular activity in years. He joined a two-night-a-week league. He couldn't go four games, and his score always dropped in the third game, but he'd worked his average up to 177. "Any ideas about what we could do so you could last for that extra game, Scott?" Warwick asked. Well, Pieper said, he'd noticed that in the cold—anything below fifty degrees—and when humidity was below fifty per cent, he did better. Warwick suggested doing an extra hour in the vest on warm or humid days and on every game day. Pieper said he'd try it.

We are used to thinking that a doctor's ability depends mainly on science and skill. The lesson from Minneapolis is that these may be the easiest parts of care. Even doctors with great knowledge and technical skill can have mediocre results; more nebulous factors like aggressiveness and consistency and ingenuity can matter enormously. In Cincinnati and in Minneapolis, the doctors are equally capable and well versed in the data on CF. But if Annie Page—who has had no breathing problems or major setbacks—were in Minneapolis she would almost certainly have had a feeding tube in her stomach and Warwick's team hounding her to figure out ways to make her breathing even better than normal.

Don Berwick believes that the subtleties of medical decision-making can be identified and learned. The lessons are hidden. But if we open the book on physicians' results, the lessons will be exposed. And if we are genuinely curious about how the best achieve their results, he believes they will spread.

The Cincinnati CF team has already begun tracking the nutrition and lung function of individual patients the way Warwick does, and is getting more aggressive in improving the results in these areas, too. Yet you have to wonder whether it is possible to replicate people like Warwick, with their intense drive and constant experimenting. In the two years since the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation began bringing together centers willing to share their data, certain patterns have begun to emerge, according to Bruce Marshall, the head of quality improvement for the foundation. All the centers appear to have made significant progress. None, however, have progressed more than centers like Fairview.

"You look at the rates of improvement in different quartiles, and it's the centers in the top quartile that are improving fastest," Marshall says. "They are at risk of breaking away." What the best may have, above all, is a capacity to learn and adapt—and to do so faster than everyone else.

Once we acknowledge that, no matter how much we improve our average, the bell curve isn't going away, we're left with all sorts of questions. Will being in the bottom half be used against doctors in lawsuits? Will we be expected to tell our patients how we score? Will our patients leave us? Will those at the bottom be paid less than those at the top? The answer to all these questions is likely yes.

Recently, there has been a lot of discussion, for example, about "paying for quality." (No one ever says "docking for mediocrity," but it amounts to the same thing.) Congress has discussed the idea in hearings. Insurers like Aetna and the Blue Cross-Blue Shield companies are introducing it across the country. Already, Medicare has decided not to pay surgeons for intestinal transplantation operations unless they achieve a predefined success rate. Not surprisingly, this makes doctors anxious. I recently sat in on a presentation of the concept to an audience of doctors. By the end, some in the crowd were practically shouting with indignation: We're going to be paid according to our *grades*? Who is doing the grading? For God's sake, how?

We in medicine are not the only ones being graded nowadays. Firemen, C.E.O.s, and salesmen are. Even teachers are being graded, and, in some places, being paid accordingly. Yet we all feel uneasy about being judged by such grades. They never seem to measure the right things. They don't take into account circumstances beyond our control. They are misused; they are unfair. Still, the simple facts remain: there is a bell curve in all human activities, and the differences you measure usually matter.

I asked Honor Page what she would do if, after all her efforts and the efforts of the doctors and nurses at Cincinnati Children's Hospital to insure that "there was no place better in the world" to receive cystic-fibrosis care, their comparative performance still rated as resoundingly average.

“I can’t believe that’s possible,” she told me. The staff have worked so hard, she said, that she could not imagine they would fail.

After I pressed her, though, she told me, “I don’t think I’d settle for Cincinnati if it remains just average.” Then she thought about it some more. Would she really move Annie away from people who had been so devoted all these years, just because of the numbers? Well, maybe. But, at the same time, she wanted me to understand that their effort counted for more than she was able to express.

I do not have to consider these matters for very long before I start thinking about where I would stand on a bell curve for the operations I do. I have chosen to specialize (in surgery for endocrine tumors), so I would hope that my statistics prove to be better than those of surgeons who only occasionally do the kind of surgery I do. But am I up in Warwickian territory? Do I have to answer this question?

The hardest question for anyone who takes responsibility for what he or she does is, What if I turn out to be average? If we took all the surgeons at my level of experience, compared our results, and found that I am one of the worst, the answer would be easy: I’d turn in my scalpel. But what if I were a C? Working as I do in a city that’s mobbed with surgeons, how could I justify putting patients under the knife? I could tell myself, Someone’s got to be average. If the bell curve is a fact, then so is the reality that most doctors are going to be average. There is no shame in being one of them, right?

Except, of course, there is. Somehow, what troubles people isn’t so much being average as settling for it. Everyone knows that averageness is, for most of us, our fate. And in certain matters—looks, money, tennis—we would do well to accept this. But in your surgeon, your child’s pediatrician, your police department, your local high school? When the stakes are our lives and the lives of our children, we expect averageness to be resisted. And so I push to make myself the best. If I’m not the best already, I believe wholeheartedly that I will be. And you expect that of me, too. Whatever the next round of numbers may say. ♦



- *Atul Gawande, a surgeon and public-health researcher, became a New Yorker staff writer in 1998.*

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Marshaling the Power of Schools

ment, and I'm sure there would be many more if we were to look systematic way for outlier districts.

SYSTEMS TO NOTE

Monitoring of individual student growth by teachers.
 Monitoring of individual teacher growth by school leaders.
 Monitoring of individual principal growth by district leaders.
 Recruitment and training of leaders at the school and district level.

A FEW OBSERVATIONS

Unexpected schools, the expectation is always that all students meet or exceed state standards. Indian River has a more modest goal that all students will progress; but it keeps things moving, enlists teachers' sense of professionalism, and has helped Bunting avoid holes about beliefs.

There is a parallel to be drawn between the systems of scheduling, tutoring, support, and accountability in unexpected schools and Indian River School District—and, I suspect, other well-organized districts.

Indian River School District focused its attention first on building the knowledge and skills of elementary school teachers and thus building the knowledge and skills of their elementary students. But it is now focused on secondary schools, and I have hope that we will see even more progress that front in future years.

I can't remember a time when I didn't think of public schools as the crucible of American democracy, founded to provide all children—irrespective of family circumstances—with a solid education that prepares them for future citizenship.

Yet the ones I attended as a child, the ones I observed as a newspaper reporter, and the ones my children went to did little to sustain that idealistic vision. Until I began actively searching out unexpectedly successful schools, the schools I experienced seemed to be organized around random acts of education, replicating inequity rather than disrupting it.

Many years ago I tried to express my dismay in a newspaper column by referring to the sloppy organization of schools. My inelegant characterization elicited an angry letter from a teacher who said that he and his colleagues were working harder than anyone had a right to expect and that I shouldn't call anything they did sloppy. Of course, he added in a burst of honesty, some teachers sat in class reading the newspaper rather than teach—but most teachers were working incredibly hard.

I asked this teacher what his school did to ensure that the students with the newspaper-reading teachers were learning what they needed to learn, and he responded: "Nothing. They're screwed."

And that's what I had meant by sloppy. This teacher's school was firmly in the tradition of being organized around isolated and idiosyncratic classrooms. As such, students could not depend on the support of the

entire school but instead had to depend solely on the efforts of individual teachers. And if teachers read the newspaper in class, so be it. At the same time, teachers could not depend on the support of the entire school, and even the hardest-working teachers saw their efforts weakened and dissipated. This point was driven home to me in subsequent conversations with my correspondent, who was frustrated that his work wasn't having the effect he had expected to have. Like many of his fellow teachers who enter the field with great optimism and idealism, he left a couple of years later, angry and disappointed.

Since then, I have spent more than a decade seeking out and learning from what I call unexpected schools—high performing and rapidly improving schools with large percentages of students of color and students from low-income families.

These schools have restored my belief that it is possible for schools to act as crucibles of democracy, providing a solid education and opportunities to students independent of their family circumstances. I no longer *think* it's possible; I *know* it is possible because I have seen such schools. Those schools are not just good places to be a student but also are satisfying places to work. In unexpected school after unexpected school, I have heard teachers and other staff members say that—although they work incredibly hard—they love their jobs because they know they are making a difference in children's lives within a supportive environment that they often describe as “like a family.”

So what is it that these teachers do to be so successful? If you were to go to these schools, you would see, well, schools. They don't *look* all that different from other schools. In many ways, they look very traditional, and they operate under the same rules and policies as other schools in their districts and states. And yet their results indicate that they are doing something very different. So what is it?

I have spent a lot of time puzzling that question through. Certainly, it is critically important that these schools have leaders who feel a moral imperative to do what is right for kids and who spend a good deal of time understanding the research evidence about teaching and learning. The previous books I have authored and coauthored have made that clear. But at a certain point in the last few years, I realized I had not paid enough

attention to the bread-and-butter work of the schools that allows them to get the results they do.

I think back many years to when I was writing a newspaper column about schools in Prince George's County, Maryland. I noticed that one of the high schools had been recognized as having more African American AP test-takers and passers than any other high school in the region, and I wanted to know what they were doing. When I visited the school, I thought the first thing the principal would do would be to tell me his AP teachers were amazing and give me a tour of the classrooms. He did eventually, and the teachers were great, and I was able to watch kids extract DNA from fruit and discuss the American Revolution.

The *first* thing the principal did, however, was take me into the office of his assistant principal, who was in charge of the school's schedule, point to a giant chart on the wall-sized whiteboard that showed when every class in the school was taught at what day and time and by whom and where, and say something to the effect of “*that's* the reason for our success.”

I look back on that moment as the beginning of my education about systems. I wasn't ready to hear it yet, so much of what the assistant principal subsequently told me went over my head. The chart, as any school person can say, was the master schedule of the school. I remember listening to the assistant principal tell me that it was built around the semester-by-semester expansion of AP classes and how he had hand scheduled hundreds of AP students to ensure they got all their classes. As he walked me through the chart to show me how he juggled all the priorities of the school to focus on giving more students the opportunity to be exposed to and master advanced material, it began to dawn on me that the master schedule was a concrete expression of the school's values.

My education has continued through more than a decade of visiting unexpected schools. In each one, teachers and leaders have talked about the issues their very vulnerable students bring to school and the systems they have put into place to address them, from master schedules to counseling groups.

These schools not only put in systems but also continually evaluate them so that they can continue and expand the ones that work or change or jettison those that don't. Here's a small example of what I mean. The

teachers and leaders of Elmont Memorial High School (chapter 3) noticed that their ninth graders were having difficulty making the transition from middle to high school. They used the master schedule to set up a “ninth-grade academy” in which groups of students would share teams of teachers who could collaborate on how to teach individual students. “It worked. For a while,” said John Capozzi, the former principal. That is to say, for a year or two ninth graders were more successful than they had been. They started slipping again because new issues had emerged. Elmont changed the schedule again.

THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD IN ACTION

In a sense this is the scientific method in action: See a problem. Analyze the cause of the problem in the light of established research. Develop a hypothesis for how to solve it. Set up a system to reflect the hypothesis and measure results. Assess to see if the system solved the problem. If it solved the problem, see if there is a way to strengthen or extend the solution. If it didn’t solve the problem—that is, if the system failed—that is not a cause for blame. Rather, it is part of the learning process en route to developing another hypothesis and another system. As such, the work is never done. As Capozzi said, “If you think you’re done, it’s time to get out.”

By focusing so closely on the systems underlying their work, educators are able to develop a professional distance and look at success and failure dispassionately rather than as a personal win or loss. The ability to examine evidence dispassionately is important because education in many ways is a very personal field, and anything that helps teachers and leaders evaluate what they are doing instead of defending how much they love a particular practice or lesson plan is important.

By the way, I don’t mean anything fancy by the term *system*. I am simply using the term to mean how schools organize things to get stuff done.¹

I understand that this is not a story of romance or drama. I venture to say that there will never be a movie about the leadership team of Artesia High School developing the master schedule or the instructional teams at Graham Road and West Gate Elementary Schools following protocols for their data meetings.

Despite the lack of drama, it is in these prosaic systems, continually monitored and examined, in which the success of unexpected schools can be located.

All of this is to say that *unexpected schools have marshaled the power of schools as institutions by establishing systems that:*

- *make visible the expectation that all students will achieve and make such achievement possible;*
- *develop leaders who help build, monitor, and evaluate the systems;*
- *support the building of relationships;*
- *improve instruction by opening up practice in ways that help expose the expertise that exists within classrooms and schools and then helping others learn from it. Specifically, this means systems that support teachers in*
 - *focusing on what students need to learn;*
 - *collaborating on how to teach them;*
 - *assessing frequently;*
 - *using data to find patterns in instruction.*

Let’s examine these points one by one.

1) **UNEXPECTED SCHOOLS HAVE MARSHALED THE POWER OF SCHOOLS AS INSTITUTIONS BY ESTABLISHING SYSTEMS THAT MAKE VISIBLE THE EXPECTATION THAT ALL STUDENTS WILL ACHIEVE AND MAKE THEIR ACHIEVEMENT POSSIBLE.** In many ways, the educators in unexpected schools embody what Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck calls a growth mindset.² Sergio Garcia, principal of Los Angeles County’s Artesia High School (chapter 1), summed it up for all of them: “It’s not about talent; it’s about effort.”

Yet when Garcia first encountered Artesia High School, he found a school that through its systems had not only made visible the expectation that most students would not achieve but also enforced that expectation very efficiently. That is, he found a school that had reserved advanced work for only a few students and had much lower-level instruction for the rest. Diane Scricca, former principal of Nassau County’s Elmont Memorial High School (chapter 3), found the same thing when she saw that mostly white students were in advanced classes and mostly

African American students were in remedial classes. For students at both schools, the message was clear: Some kids are smart, and they get to talk about great literature, wrestle with historical dilemmas, learn foreign languages, and study knotty mathematical and scientific problems; other kids are not-so-smart and do remedial work that never seems to remediate. That is to say, they do low-level work that never helps them access higher-level work but just keeps them busy and bored. When they become angry at how their time is wasted, they are prime candidates for suspension and expulsion.³

To address this problem, Garcia and Scricca both used one of the most powerful systems they had available to them: *the master schedule*. Garcia acted immediately, even before school started his first year, to get all students who had been scheduled for consumer math, pre-algebra, and general math into Algebra I. Because he knew that students who hadn't really mastered arithmetic were going to be in trouble, he scheduled those students who were behind into a second class that provided additional help and scheduled after-school tutoring for students who needed it.

Note that having *a system of extra support* is key. Many schools and school districts in the last decade have declared their intention to get every eighth grader into Algebra I, knowing that that is a gateway to higher math and thus college preparation. And yet many did not build in a system of support that would allow those students who hadn't fully mastered arithmetic to be successful in algebra. That meant hordes of students have failed to master Algebra I, to the frustration of students and teachers all over the country.

As Garcia says, "You can have all the expectations in the world, but if you don't have systems of support, it doesn't mean anything."

Scricca did much the same thing as Garcia, although she took a somewhat more gradualist approach. Beginning with the seventh grade and working her way up through the grades, she eliminated all classes below the level of honors, or college preparatory. She still needed a system of support, though. To get that, she scheduled the seventh- and eighth-grade English and math teachers so that they had four sections of one class, meaning that they had only one set of lessons to prepare. For their fifth class she scheduled the teachers to teach a support class in which they previewed for struggling students the vocabulary and background they would

need for those lessons, anticipating the obstacles and misunderstandings students might have. "We didn't wait for them to fail. We gave them the support they needed ahead of time," Scricca said.

Note that Garcia and Scricca knew—from research and their own experience—that until struggling students develop a growth mindset, they see coming in for extra help as an expression of failure and are reluctant to come after school. Knowing that, Garcia and Scricca built the extra help into the school day, making it a requirement rather than optional.

This approach is emblematic of all the unexpected schools—students are expected to master high-level class work—and the schools have systems to improve core classroom instruction that we'll get to in a minute. The educators in the schools are well aware that even the best classroom instruction can't always compensate for gaps in vocabulary, background knowledge, and organizational wherewithal. Rather than lower standards, the schools build a system of mandatory additional support for students.

When Elmont Memorial High School faced an issue with an influx of new high school students, many of whom were unprepared for the rigor of Elmont's classes, Scricca set up another system whereby students were required to attend Saturday "Welcome Academy" classes that alternated, week by week, between English and social studies, and math and science. In those classes the teachers previewed the work students would be doing in the coming weeks, helping them learn the necessary vocabulary and background knowledge and anticipating misunderstandings. Most students and families probably knew that Scricca couldn't legally require students to attend on Saturday, but they came anyway. And new students did much better than before the Welcome Academy was established.

Elementary schools, of course, have different kinds of master schedules because students generally have only one classroom teacher rather than six or seven. Many elementary schools have rather simple master schedules built around the key questions of when kids go to lunch, recess, and "specials," meaning art, music, and so forth.

Sometimes elementary schools allow the specials teachers to build the schedules, resulting in fragmented instructional schedules. Sometimes master schedules are simply arranged in ways that they have always been arranged. One of my favorite examples is that when Deb Gustafson walked into Ware Elementary, which I wrote about in *HOW It's Being Done*, she

found that the master schedule was arranged so that every class had fifteen minutes to go to the bathroom in the morning and afternoon, thus using up half an hour a day—ninety hours a year—that could otherwise have been used for instruction. Not only was it a huge time waster, the master schedule assumed that all kids needed to go to the bathroom at the same time. Needless to say, she changed the schedules immediately and set the policy that students would go to the bathroom when they needed to rather than when the schedule said they should.

In fact, pretty much the first thing all the unexpected school leaders did when they arrived in their schools was to redo the master schedule. In elementary schools, the goal was always to provide uninterrupted blocks of time for instruction for students and collaboration of teachers. Some of this rescheduling is about using the resources available to the school in the most efficient way. So, for example, when Molly Bensinger-Lacy arrived at Graham Road (chapter 5), she immediately changed the master schedule so that the specialists who could help with reading instruction—the special educator, the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher, the reading specialist, and so forth—were in classrooms during the appropriate time. This meant that teachers were no longer in charge of when they would teach reading and when math; they had to teach reading when the master schedule said. Because the supply of resource teachers was limited, it also meant that reading was taught throughout the day so that the specialists could move from grade to grade. As a result, teachers couldn't teach reading only in the morning, which is when many prefer to do so. Such an incursion into the isolated, autonomous, idiosyncratic classroom was not welcomed by all of the teachers, who were used to arranging their instruction. However, it was necessary if all students were to get the support they needed to master grade-level standards.

As in the unexpected secondary schools, the elementary schools build in additional support in what they usually call *systems of interventions*. So, for example, Craig Gfeller (chapter 5) used the master schedule to build in 20 minutes a day for students to get individual extra help for anything they were struggling with—three days in their classrooms and two days in specialists' rooms. Similarly, Ricardo Leblanc-Esparza (chapter 6) scheduled half-an-hour a day for “flex time,” which allowed students to get extra

help. I have seen schools—particularly schools where many students are learning English—in which an entire hour a day is scheduled for intervention. The reason is that, as Bensinger-Lacy says, “You lose your motivation when you're failing and no one is available to help you.”

As unexpected schools become more successful, they become more focused on students who have already mastered the material taught in their classes. When the data indicate they have students who are advanced, they build *systems of enrichment* to provide additional challenges for them.

Both the systems of interventions and systems of enrichment require systems of assessment data, but we will get to them in part 4.

Systems of discipline become another way to make expectations visible. Unexpected schools expect students to meet high standards, including high behavioral standards, but they consider discipline to be another form of educational support rather than punishment. This is a key distinction, and one that is being grappled with now in national conversations about racial and class disparities in school disciplinary actions.

I should say, before going any further, that students who bring weapons or hard drugs and thus endanger other students are suspended and expelled in unexpected schools. In this, they are like other schools.

Such incidents are highly unusual, though. The much more ordinary disciplinary issues of talking back, often called defiance and insubordination, are seen as opportunities to build relationships, develop motivation, and make clear that students are expected to achieve in unexpected schools. For example, Ricardo Leblanc-Esparza used misbehavior as a way to connect back to students' ambitions. “Didn't you tell me you wanted to be a nurse?” he would say. “Is this behavior going to help you? No? Let's get back to work.” Every time he met with a student and the student's parents in his office about a disciplinary matter—actually, whenever he met with them—he began by going over the data—what the student's reading and math levels were, what these levels should be, and what they were going to do about that. The academic needs of students were his focus; discipline was a means to fulfill those needs.

The emphasis in unexpected schools is always on making sure students do not lose instructional time whenever possible. Even those students who are suspended will sometimes be brought back to school for a particularly important lesson.

All the unexpected school leaders understand that many disciplinary problems can be traced back to feelings of failure or feelings of boredom, both of which can be fixed by improved instruction. Kennard Branch, when he began at Garfield Prep (chapter 5), said he first focused on improving instruction because he thought it would handle 80 percent of the discipline problems. He was a little overoptimistic, but not much: discipline problems dropped 70 percent as instruction improved. To address the remaining discipline issues, he developed a system of direct behavioral support to teachers. Garfield Prep is down to having just three or four students who remain what he calls “high-flyers.”

Unexpected school leaders and teachers also know that some disciplinary issues emerge because their students have suffered trauma or are dealing with difficult situations. Such students often have hair-trigger reactions to failure and feeling disrespected, and unexpected school educators believe that helping them learn to cope and deal with those feelings is part of their job.

“If you can overcome a crisis in your life; if you can overcome poverty; if you can overcome crime; if you can overcome any obstacle in your life, if you become a stronger person,” says Jennie Black, about whom I wrote in *HOW It’s Being Done*. “So we need to see poverty and we need to tell children, ‘You are strong enough to handle this. Now what do we need to do to help you get to that next level?’”

Ricci Hall at Claremont Academy (chapter 5) works to help students get a handle on their anger and inappropriate behavior. A very typical situation in schools—including Claremont—is that a teacher remonstrates with a student in a way the student believes is unfair. He or she objects, the discussion escalates, and the teacher finally throws the student out of class for insubordination. Hall works with students to find better ways to have handled the situation. Then quietly, without undermining the teacher’s authority, he works with the teacher on ways that the teacher might be able to de-escalate the next situation, helping students feel respected and act in more respectful ways.

Framing discipline as another way of educating students is a recognition that many schools have a tradition of treating students in ways that are disrespectful. When Deb Gustafson arrived at Ware Elementary, she told teachers that the only thing she would ever discipline them for is being dis-

respectful to a student. When teachers objected that they were themselves disrespected by students, she said that children’s behaviors are a direct reflection of what is occurring around them in the school. “The school is so powerful; this is why you can have children from very dysfunctional homes demonstrate respectful behaviors at school. Respect gathers respect.”

Similarly, Hall says repeatedly, “Teacher culture drives student culture.” For this reason, a student who was, in Scricca’s words, “wiggling out” in the hallway one day could easily have been suspended in another high school. Instead he became a “special project” for her and other staff members who made a point of checking in with him, making sure he was okay, and seeing if he needed anything. “The leaders establish the expectations for teachers,” said Scricca. “You are expected to love every kid—even the unlovable ones—and I’m going to show you how by my doing it. Every single day.”

Similarly, every day Debbie Bolden, principal of Gilliard Elementary (chapter 4), checked the backpack of a student who threatened to kill his teacher earlier in the semester, asks him how he’s doing, gives him a big hug, and tells him to have a good day.

When students’ behavior requires more help than can be provided by instructional staff, unexpected schools work to bring in whatever outside help is available. When they can, they have social workers on staff who work to help students manage their emotions. At Malverne High School, I heard from many students who credited social worker Joseph Aquino with helping them deal with their anger and distrust to focus on academics. It took Gilliard Elementary School years, but it finally was able to get public mental health professionals assigned part-time to the school; George Hall Elementary (chapter 4) physically took students to psychiatrists who would be paid by families’ Medicaid funds until they were able to set up a video link so that students could have check-ins with their psychiatrists remotely.

All of these examples illustrate that unexpected schools don’t write off any student, no matter how difficult their circumstances or their behavior. They say all students can achieve, and then they build the systems that can make that happen.

Master schedules and systems of discipline are two of the most powerful systems all the unexpected schools use to enforce beliefs about student

capacities, but they aren't the only ones. They all have *systems of recognition* that work to enforce the idea that all students can achieve.

Schools must be very careful about what these systems of recognition are because many, in an attempt to incorporate the idea of growth mindsets, lost their way by recognizing unproductive effort rather than achievement. In fact, the trend became so alarming that Carol Dweck wrote an article in *Education Week* in 2015 to try to get educators to stop praising effort.

Recently, someone asked what keeps me up at night. It's the fear that the mindset concepts, which grew up to *counter* the failed self-esteem movement, will be used to *perpetuate* that movement. In other words, if you want to make students feel good, even if they're not learning, just praise their effort! Want to hide learning gaps from them? Just tell them, "Everyone is smart!" The growth mindset was intended to help close achievement gaps, not hide them. It is about telling the truth about a student's current achievement and then, together, doing something about it, helping him or her become smarter.⁴

From what I have seen, unexpected schools have not fallen into the trap that Dweck worries about. They know that students need to feel successful and that success builds upon success. So, particularly when they are first starting, these schools might find ways to recognize accomplishments that fall short of actual achievement. They might, for example, recognize task completion—that is, something completely within the control of students—such as keeping their writing journal for an entire week, meeting their Accelerated Reader goal, or attending a Saturday support class.

Making this effort is just a stepping stone to recognition for successful, productive struggle with academic work. Ricardo Leblanc-Esparza would give a school T-shirt that could be worn on "Spirit Fridays" to any students who mastered the math facts appropriate to their grade level. Kindergartners counted to one hundred; third graders mastered their multiplication facts, and so on. The adults—the teachers, secretaries, janitors, and even Esparza—had their own math tests to master in order to get the T-shirts. It took some time for some of the students—and even for all the

adults—but eventually they all got their T-shirts. They wore them proudly, knowing that the shirts were symbols of actual accomplishment and that they were part of collectively raising school achievement.

When Artesia High School first began recognizing academic achievement, Sergio Garcia realized he had to first make recognition safe when a student stuffed a celebratory T-shirt into his backpack saying that he could get beaten up for doing well in school. "We needed to do mass recognition," Garcia said. So he and the other leaders worked out a system to recognize both absolute achievement and progress together. If a student went from F to F+, that was recognized, on the grounds that sooner or later improvement would get the student to achievement. Now most students at Artesia are recognized for real accomplishment, even if it is only a small step toward achievement.

By recognizing both absolute achievement and improvement—in classrooms and schoolwide—students taste the rewards of success and begin to see the results of hard work. They themselves begin to see that they can get smarter. A senior at Imperial High School, which I wrote about in *HOW It's Being Done*, said, "At other schools, [you hear], 'there are the smart kids.' Here, we're *all* the smart kids." That's one of the most striking things I ever heard a student say.

Unexpected school leaders often have to bring their teachers along on this question of high expectations. "They have come through a system," Vincent Romano (chapter 2), principal of Malverne High School, told me. "There were the regular kids, the honors kids, the AP kids. A lot of teachers were the AP kids. We're still challenging the idea that it's the haves and the have-nots." And so, unexpected schools develop a *system of professional development that focuses on setting high expectations for all children*. Sometimes that means leading book studies of Carol Dweck's work, case studies of successful high-poverty schools, or reviews of research such as books by Robert Marzano or John Hattie; sometimes it means visiting schools with similar demographics that are more successful; sometimes it means having teachers get training from Jeff Howard's Efficacy Institute or from Learning Forward, one of the country's key professional development organizations.⁵ The leaders know that changing beliefs about the nature of intelligence is not easy and truly happens only when teachers see improved instruction help unexpected students achieve. But the leaders'

belief in the power of education means that they believe teachers, too, can learn and become more expert.

Just as they have systems of recognition for student achievement and progress, these leaders similarly recognize teachers for the achievement and progress of their students. “When teachers are holding students to high expectations and we see success—that is celebrated too,” said Vincent Romano. “I think after years of this, many of our teachers think they can walk on water!”

A couple of other systems seem obvious and yet they need to be mentioned:

- *A system of organizing the physical space of schools to maximize learning.* Educators in schools rarely have the chance to weigh in on the actual architecture of their buildings. For the most part they are stuck with whatever they have. But they can make the most of what they have. A school that is dirty, disorganized, and where teachers and classes are scattered higgledy-piggledy is a clear signal to children and their parents—and to teachers and other staff members—that not much is expected of them and there isn’t a lot of support to help them achieve. As Craig Gfeller says, the condition of the building is a “metaphor” for the expectations in the building. This is why almost every unexpected school leader spends time initially making sure the building is clean and well organized. School maintenance people are considered to be leaders of the physical environment of learning and are thus part of the educational experience students have—that is to say, they also play an important role in educating students. In the unexpected schools I’ve been in, they are clearly proud of that role. They encourage students to do their best and are sometimes even mentors for them. In other words, school maintenance staff members are treated with the same kind of respect and authority and responsibility as any other member of the team and have the same level of expectations set for their work. This is true for everyone—the cafeteria workers, the school secretaries, the teachers’ aides—everyone.

- *A system of organizing supplies and materials to maximize learning.* As I was writing this conclusion, I mentioned the issue of supplies to a couple of principals, and I heard stories I had never heard before. For example,

Molly Bensing-Lacy told me that when she arrived at Graham Road Elementary, the school had a locked book room that had a huge inventory of books that teachers could request but couldn’t browse. Since they weren’t allowed in, they didn’t even know what was there. Many had spent their own money to buy classroom books or used old and inadequate basal readers. Bensing-Lacy had to order the teacher’s aide who was in charge of the book room to allow teachers in. “There were lots of tears,” she said. Similarly, Sergio Garcia said when he arrived, teachers weren’t allowed in the photocopy rooms. He had to order the secretarial staff to allow the teachers to make copies.

Another leader who has taken the job of principal in a low performing school heard complaints from teachers that they didn’t have the materials and supplies they needed when she first arrived. When she toured the building, she found an entire closet of Scotch tape, the result of years’ worth of standing orders to the district. After she gave away as much tape to the other schools in the district as they would take, she still had half a closet’s worth. She immediately reviewed the supply list requested of the district to make sure that it reflected what kids actually need for learning.

It isn’t hard to ensure that teachers have the materials and supplies they should have. All of these schools get federal Title I dollars which can be used for materials and supplies. But making sure the resources are used properly takes leaders who pay attention to ensuring that teachers and students have what they need in order to teach and learn. When leaders don’t pay attention, it is yet another signal to kids—and, even more pointedly, to teachers—that they are on their own.

2) UNEXPECTED SCHOOLS HAVE MARSHALED THE POWER OF SCHOOLS AS INSTITUTIONS BY ESTABLISHING SYSTEMS THAT DEVELOP LEADERS WHO HELP BUILD, MONITOR, AND EVALUATE THE SYSTEMS (AND IN THE PROCESS BUILD THE NEXT GENERATION OF SCHOOL LEADERS). Setting up a system is relatively easy. But the power of a system doesn’t come from setting it up; it comes from implementing the system faithfully and then evaluating to see if it accomplished the goal it was intended to accomplish. If it did, it needs to continue or intensify; if it didn’t, it needs to be adjusted or abandoned. That evaluative process first requires monitoring to ensure

that the system is being followed and to gather the appropriate data to see if it's working.

Monitoring is the part few people want to do because it's—well, quite honestly—it's kind of tedious.

When Esparza set up a system at Granger High School to ensure that every student's family was met with and their help enlisted by a student's advisor, he had to monitor to make sure that those meetings actually happened. That task involved receiving a piece of paper from every advisor reporting on the student conferences and keeping the resulting contracts available in case they were needed. None of that requires overwhelming effort, but it requires a system of monitoring that involves a certain amount of tedium. Similarly, someone had to continually monitor attendance and update the poster Granger had in the hall stating which students owed time to the school because of unexcused absences. Unless you can see a direct line from that system to helping students achieve at higher levels, it is hard to maintain the enthusiasm for that kind of continual monitoring.

Principals are the obvious people to monitor many of the systems in a school. But schools address far too many issues for principals to be the only monitors.

At this point leadership throughout the school—what Harvard University's Richard Elmore calls “distributed leadership”—comes into play. Teachers, counselors, assistant principals, school secretaries, cafeteria managers—everyone is a leader in some way in unexpected schools, and they all build and monitor systems. At Artesia High School, this monitoring even extends to the master schedule, which is built every year by the thirteen members of the leadership team, including department chairs who represent the interests of the teachers in their departments. In addition, Artesia High School has thirty-nine schoolwide systems—they call them “campaigns”—that the entire faculty have agreed to. All those systems have to be monitored, but most of them, such as the way data is used and displayed in classrooms, or ensuring that students are writing across the curriculum, are monitored by the teachers themselves. “They all get rolled up and go past my desk where I review them, but I don't do the initial monitoring. They have internal accountability,” says Sergio Garcia. I should note that some of Artesia's systems originate with teachers and are adopted even against Garcia's wishes. This happens for two reasons:

first, because teachers' professionalism and expertise are respected and valued; and second, because Garcia knows that any mistakes that are made in setting up systems will be caught in the monitoring and evaluation process. That is to say, if systems don't solve the problems they were intended to solve, the monitoring process ensures that fact will be noticed and the evaluation process ensures it will be changed or jettisoned.

Every unexpected school has its own version of a leadership development system that helps build the evaluative capacity of everyone in the building. So, for example, Scricca regularly had her cabinet members observe a videotaped lesson together and share what observations they had and what commendations and recommendations they would give to teachers. This process helped all the leaders in the school understand not only what instruction should look like but also what help and support leaders were expected to offer teachers.

This leadership development is part of what Deb Gustafson of Ware Elementary says gets the flywheel going. That is to say, the initial effort to marshal all the systems of a school to help students be successful is enormously time- and energy-consuming, somewhat like the energy needed to get the flywheel of a machine going. Once it's in motion, though, it almost keeps itself going.

For example, when Molly Bensinger-Lacy was principal of Graham Road Elementary School, she sat in on every grade-level collaboration meeting to ensure teachers stayed focused on instruction and didn't get sidetracked into discussing logistical issues such as chartering buses for field trips. At a certain point, when the grade-level leaders she had trained and developed had taken control of monitoring and adjusting the systems, “I realized I wasn't needed there anymore.” She kept track of the meetings by reviewing the agendas and notes from the meetings, but she no longer needed to attend the meetings in person.

The leadership development process in unexpected schools has another powerful effect beyond ensuring individual coherent schools, and that is in developing leaders to make change in other schools. In this book I identified Kennard Branch and Craig Gfeller as the “next generation” to highlight how this process works, but actually there are many more examples of leaders who got their training at unexpected schools. Elmont Memorial High School alone has been the training ground for principals,

assistant superintendents, and superintendents across Long Island. I didn't write much about her in this book, but Deb Gustafson at Ware Elementary is a one-woman principal preparation program, responsible for the hiring and training of more than half the principals in her district and others in that part of Kansas. Similarly, over the past decade Artesia High School has produced almost a dozen principals and assistant principals who are scattered around southern California, part of a deliberate process on the part of Sergio Garcia to "replicate what's happening here so it doesn't die with the school."

Large national conversations are going on about how we can get more of the school leaders we need. It seems to me that one way is for unexpected schools to incubate them. That's not a quick fix. But it may be an enduring one.

3) UNEXPECTED SCHOOLS HAVE MARSHALED THE POWER OF SCHOOLS AS INSTITUTIONS BY ESTABLISHING SYSTEMS THAT BUILD RELATIONSHIPS. In *HOW It's Being Done*, I identified five key processes that all unexpected schools shared. We'll get to the other four in a minute, but one of them was "build relationships."

Identifying this process is a simple way to talk about what in many ways is a complex subject. A great deal of research indicates that how students feel about school and their teachers is key to how much and how well they learn. This is particularly true for students who are experiencing academic failure or some kinds of difficulties in their home lives.

Educators in unexpected schools build systems to ensure that students—particularly students who are having some kind of problem—develop strong relationships with at least one adult in the school who expresses confidence in the child's ability to overcome obstacles and meet high standards—and offers help and support. For example, almost all the schools have as many after-school classes and programs as they can possibly pay for in order to help build student connections to the school both through fun activities and through their relationships with the teachers who lead clubs and sports. When Scricca arrived at Elmont, she found a school where almost every sport was coached by someone who did not teach at the school. It took her six years, but over time she convinced teachers that it was important to students that they have

nonclassroom connections with teachers—and that teachers have that connection to students.

Similarly, Artesia High School developed a full complement of after-school activities to make the school an "oasis" for students and a "center for the community."

It is when schools have a particular worry about a student, however, that their systems really kick in. At many schools, anyone who has a concern about a student can request some kind of team meeting at which the power of the school is mustered. The team might ask for a staff member—anyone from the maintenance engineer to the school secretary—to volunteer to check in with the student every day, have lunch once a week, or make some other regular contact and report back to the team how the student is doing. If that isn't sufficient, further resources will be drawn on—counselors, social workers, outside mental health services—whatever is necessary. For example, Malverne High School has a plan in place for every student about whom the school has concerns. That means that a staff member serves as a mentor who helps guide the student into appropriate help and support and into activities he or she might enjoy. When Keshia Bascombe (chapter 2) realized that teachers needed ready access to that information so that they would know what was going on, she built an Excel sheet that teachers can consult if a question about a student arises.

Ware Elementary, which has a great deal of student turnover because it sits on an army base, had a worry about how new students would quickly integrate into the school. The school developed a system in which new students are assigned to a group of student leaders who sit with them at lunch, explain the school's rules and culture, and go to recess with them. (By the way, being chosen as a student leader is part of the system of recognition, in this case for students' good school citizenship.)

This process doesn't work only for students; new teachers at Ware are also assigned a group of teacher leaders who perform the adult version of integrating newbies into the school culture. This example points to the fact that student connections aren't the only relationships being built. Relationships among teachers and staff are also systematically cultivated both through the processes of collaboration and through systematic social events to build collegiality. For example, before schoolwide events such as concerts and plays, faculty members at Artesia have dinner together;

at other schools grade levels, departments, and entire faculties regularly have breakfasts and barbeques.

The point is that building relationships is seen as important, and because it is important, it is not left to happenstance.

4) UNEXPECTED SCHOOLS HAVE MARSHALED THE POWER OF SCHOOLS AS INSTITUTIONS BY ESTABLISHING SYSTEMS THAT IMPROVE INSTRUCTION BY EXPOSING THE EXPERTISE THAT EXISTS WITHIN CLASSROOMS AND SCHOOLS AND THEN HELPING OTHERS LEARN FROM IT. The way unexpected schools improve instruction is by incorporating four processes, all of which have the effect of opening up practice. I discuss them in great detail in *HOW It's Being Done*. I won't repeat everything I said there, but briefly the four processes require the following:

- *A laser-like focus on what students need to know.* This means that teachers must all have a clear, shared idea of what standards and curriculum students are expected to master and what they need to know to a great level of specificity. For example, if students are expected to analyze primary-source documents, teachers agree on a clear definition of what primary-source documents are and which ones they will use to teach students the topic they are addressing.
- *Collaboration on how to teach it.* No one single teacher can possibly know all the curriculum, the pedagogy, and all the students well enough to teach all students all they need to know. If every student is to master standards, teachers must be able to draw on both available research and the combined craft knowledge and expertise of all the teachers in their school—and sometimes in their district or region.
- *Frequent assessment to see if students learned it.* Students need timely, accurate feedback on what they are learning; teachers need timely, accurate feedback on what they are teaching. Abundant research indicates this kind of feedback is key to student achievement, and assessments help provide it.⁶ Not every assessment needs to be a paper-and-pencil test; assessments can be exit tickets, oral presentations, even classroom discussion. But they need to be frequent. While many assessments should be made by teachers to provide immediate, focused feedback on daily lessons, regular outside assessments are also necessary to ensure

teachers' instruction is on the right track. Those outside assessments should be aligned to the standards and curriculum schools are expected to teach, and students and teachers should be able to see all the questions and answers so that they can get all the feedback information they need from them. That is not where we are right now with state assessments, but it is what we should aim for.

- *Using data to drive instruction.* Unexpected schools use assessment data in two ways:
 - to see which students learned whatever was taught and need enrichment and which students didn't learn it and need extra instruction;
 - to find patterns in instruction, by which I mean looking for which teachers, which grade levels, which departments, which groups were doing better to expose expertise and learn from it.

The most powerful conversation that can occur in any school is when one teacher says to another, "Your kids did better than mine. What did you do?" And that conversation can happen only when teachers are looking at data from the same assessments of the same subject matter given at roughly the same time. That means that teachers need to agree on what they are teaching when.

Put together, the preceding four processes are what drive the improvements in instruction in unexpected schools.

All of these processes require systems to ensure that they can and will happen.

One of the simplest ways for schools to open up classrooms to expose expertise is to literally open them up so that teachers can observe each other's classrooms. Even simply seeing each other's classes can be eye-opening for teachers. More powerful than random observation, however, is teachers observing their colleagues employing effective practices or teaching specific content in which they are particularly expert. But, as teachers all over the country can attest, this requires master schedules that support classroom observation—which often includes coverage of classrooms, either by other teachers or leaders or substitute teachers. And that requires having a system to ensure that whoever is covering the

class is knowledgeable and skillful enough to continue the learning in that class. The reason is that, as Valerie Lewis of P.S. 124, which I wrote about in *HOW It's Being Done*, has said, "No one has the right to waste a student's time."

Observation, though valuable, is only the beginning. Unexpected schools employ deep collaboration to improve instruction. For example, at Claremont Academy teachers have slowly begun developing "collaborative lesson plans" to gather the knowledge and expertise of their colleagues in providing their students with what they call "powerful learning experiences." At Elmont and Malverne, teachers collaborate with their colleagues and their department chairs to deepen their lessons and make them as powerful as possible.

At all unexpected schools, teachers meet together regularly as teams or departments to collaborate. Often they need more time than the standard hour-or-so-a-day planning time most teachers have as part of their contracts, and that requires some creativity on the part of leaders, either in finding substitute teachers to cover classes, or some other solution. To give just one example in detail, at Graham Road, Molly Bensinger-Lacy and her team realized that the way the master schedule operated, grade-level teams were not able to collaborate with the specialists—the ESOL teachers, special educators, and the reading specialist—and so instruction was not as coherent as it needed to be. So she cobbled together an hour a week for each grade level from kindergarten through fifth grade.

The way this worked was that she and the teachers agreed that in exchange for leaving fifteen minutes before the end of the contractual day one day a week, teachers, including the specialists, would meet one day in the library at the beginning of the contractual day—that is, at 7:45 a.m.—for seventy minutes during the time that was normally allocated for setting up their classroom and for the first fifteen minutes of school. During that fifteen minutes of school time, their classes were covered by teaching assistants and the counselor and art, music, physical education, and Spanish language teachers, who would collect homework, hold morning meetings, and begin the instructional day.

During their meetings, teachers studied standards, planned lessons, planned and analyzed results from common assessments, discussed professional literature, or focused on a problem of practice they had identi-

fied and collaborated about how to incorporate the research and expertise they had developed in a systematic way. This was a powerful way to improve instruction, but it required several systems to be in place:

1. The master schedule and coverage schedule for classroom teachers, as well as an arrival schedule for staff monitoring the arrival of buses, students arriving on foot and by car, and breakfast that didn't conflict with the coverage schedule.
2. An established morning routine of students entering the school and classrooms ready to learn.
3. A cadre of trained teachers' aides and "specials" teachers who understood the morning routines and knew how to move instruction along so that students' time wasn't wasted.
4. A system of communication between teachers and the staff members who covered their classes.
5. A system of data collection and analysis to enable teachers to identify significant problems of practice.
6. Carefully built protocols to ensure that that 70 minutes of collaboration accomplished the goals of improving the knowledge and expertise of teachers so that instruction would improve.
7. Team calendars that scheduled discussion of standards, lesson planning, and follow-up assessments to match curriculum pacing guides.

This example gives just a sense of the underpinnings of one way to improve instruction. But let's face it: This requires a level of rather tedious management; it would have been very easy to simply say it was impossible. But Bensinger-Lacy—like the other unexpected school leaders—knew that her students needed expert instruction to learn to high levels, and that required that teachers continually improve their knowledge and skills. And that required the kind of collaboration that couldn't be accommodated in a normal schedule.

A particularly powerful system for improving instruction is the *teacher observation and evaluation system*, and unexpected schools all take it very seriously. Teachers and classroom instruction are the heart of unexpected schools, and the observation and evaluation systems unexpected school

leaders employ are designed to help them improve. Principals think of themselves as head teachers, and as such are not only teachers' bosses but also their teachers and resources. None of them have the same exact system, but they all have ways to ensure that principals and other leaders are in classrooms regularly and meet with teachers to talk about instruction. In fact, they often schedule their time in classrooms and in collaboration meetings first, making the rest of their job fit in.

Just as unexpected schools ensure that additional systems of support are in place for students who struggle, they ensure that additional systems of support are in place for teachers who struggle. "There's an analogy between students and teachers," said Scricca. "My best leaders were my best teachers—because they taught the teachers."

If a teacher is having a particular problem with classroom management or with teaching a particular topic, for example, that teacher might be teamed up with another teacher who is more expert in that area. I've seen teachers double up their classes to take advantage of a particular teacher's expertise. Or the more expert teacher—or reading or math specialist—might teach model lessons while the other teacher is present to observe.

Professional development doesn't stop, however, when a teacher isn't struggling. All teachers have more they can learn or areas in which they can become more skillful. There is simply too much for a teacher to know to think that any teacher can possibly be expert in all areas. Having this clear understanding removes the stigma of imperfection. No one is expected to be perfect. But all teachers are expected to be moving forward and improving. It is there that the evaluation system comes in, in unexpected schools. Teachers who refuse to participate in the processes that lead to improvement are considered to be real drags on the school and come under increasing scrutiny, with more observations and more intense conversations about what their plans are for each one of their students and what lessons they plan.

Sometimes teachers under that kind of scrutiny rise to the challenge and engage more productively in collaboration and improve their classroom instruction. When they don't, they often leave of their own accord, worn out by the expectations and unwilling to face the continual

disappointment of their fellow teachers. But if they don't leave on their own accord, the leaders consider it their responsibility to counsel them out of the profession. "Strong school leaders must be able to honestly say, 'I would place my own child in this classroom,'" Deb Gustafson of Ware Elementary said. "The removal of ineffective teachers is some of the most difficult and time-consuming work of a school leader, but also some of the most important."

Unexpected school leaders try to hire people who share their vision that all students will achieve. They provide a great deal of help and support to teachers to help them achieve success, but at a certain point they will give up on a teacher in a way they will not give up on a student. Then these leaders do not engage in simply passing along teachers they think are harmful to other schools, a practice widely known as "the dance of the lemons." They do the work to document teachers' failings and either counsel them out of the profession or fire them. Leaders do that because they feel a responsibility to children to ensure they get a good education.

The systems many of the unexpected leaders have for observation and evaluation have been disrupted by the new evaluation systems that have been put in place in most states. The New York State evaluation system was one part of why John Capozzi left as principal of Elmont Memorial High School. He felt he had been relegated to a mere manager of an evaluation system that, in his eyes, did teachers—and thus students—a disservice. Most of the unexpected school leaders have found ways to make the new evaluation systems work for them, but doing so has required quite a few contortions. The rigid evaluative guidelines many states have mandated are an attempt at a kind of workaround around the rather weak principal corps. But evaluative checklists will never substitute for deep professional knowledge and expertise. That is to say, there is no workaround. We need leaders who understand how to lead improvement.

FINAL WORDS

People who haven't hung around schools much might be puzzled by the essential argument that I am making in this book, which is that schools should be organized in ways to ensure that all students learn a great deal.

They might think: “They’re schools! What else would they be organized around?”

Yet many pressures on schools pull away from a coherent set of organizational practices that enable high achievement. The most significant pressure is the traditional way schools have been organized around isolated, individual, autonomous practice. To overcome the institutional inertia that protects individual classrooms requires a deep belief that all students are capable of achievement and an equally deep belief that it is the responsibility of adults in a school to work together to ensure that students succeed. This question of belief in students’ capacities is at the core of unexpected schools. If teachers and other educators don’t believe in their students’ abilities, they are more likely to simply keep going with what they’re doing. That doesn’t mean, by the way, that they’re not working hard. Most educators are working very hard. But if they don’t believe their students are capable of developing their abilities, they will be reluctant to go that extra distance to learn what more can be done and change what they are doing, and then keep changing in response to new students, new colleagues, new standards, new assessments, new content, new research, and new technologies in the light of research and the craft knowledge that has been developed by expert educators.

I am not saying that educators should jump on every bandwagon or “innovate” simply for the sake of innovation. But they need to keep the end result—student achievement—in mind and continually think about what else can help to reach it, setting up systems, monitoring, and adjusting.

This is the type of innovation I have seen in unexpected schools, and if educators can make schools work for poor children and children of color, then they can make them work for all children. After all, unexpected schools have all kinds of strikes against them: they often have shamefully scarce resources and the low prestige that comes from serving the students they serve. And yet they have marshaled the collective power of schools as institutions in ways that make them enormously successful.

We should acknowledge that educating all children is difficult work and that most educators don’t yet have the knowledge and expertise necessary. But that doesn’t mean the knowledge and expertise don’t exist. As Sergio Garcia says, “This isn’t rocket science. It’s doable.”

But it’s doable only if we pay great attention to what it takes to create and sustain these schools. And it’s doable only if educators believe their students are capable of achievement and are willing to do the systematic, thoughtful, creative—and occasionally tedious—work necessary to provide it.

Standard VI

Strategic Management

Accomplished principals skillfully lead the design, development, and implementation of strategic management systems and processes that actualize the vision and mission. These principals lead the monitoring and adaptation of systems and processes to ensure they are effective and efficient in support of a high-performing organization focused on effective teaching and learning.

Accomplished principals are strategic managers as well as instructional leaders. They continuously pursue the optimal performance of the complex learning organization. These principals create transparent systems that bolster the sustainability and success of the organization, focused on results and consistent with beliefs and values. These systems are organized for student and staff success in achieving the school's goals of high performance.

Accomplished principals provide organizational oversight and coherent management to carry out the organization's mission. To that end, these principals lead the identification, orchestration, and monitoring of all aspects of operations, from instruction to the use of human and financial capital, to the physical plant and the legal aspects and administration of policies and procedures.

Accomplished principals know and understand the legal rights and responsibilities of students and staff. These principals know that professional knowledge and sensitivity to areas of potential litigation are vital to successful leadership. With increasing decision-making authority vested at the school building level, there is a great need for principals to behave in a legally defensible manner and to know what these behaviors look like.

Accomplished principals demonstrate knowledge of good financial planning and facility management. These principals recognize the importance of budgeting instructional monies, managing the physical environment, and effective fiscal accounting to accomplish its goals as a learning organization.

Accomplished principals develop human resource management processes that are aligned with both local and federal policies and regulations. This requires knowledge of personnel law, collective bargaining when applicable, organizational policy, administrative theory, and an understanding of staff recruitment, selection, development, and performance appraisal practices.

Accomplished principals apply their knowledge, skills, and selected tools to design appropriate and sustainable strategic management systems. These principals create conditions for success through organizational and management practices that effectively support learning and instructional performances, create clarity and trust, organize staff time effectively, and are strong on implementation, operations, and project management. They know when, why, and how to use these systems effectively and build internal capacity to sustain them.

Accomplished principals maximize the focus on instruction by developing systems that operate smoothly and preserve the integrity of the learning environment. They keep the entire organization focused on results and functioning at high levels of efficiency and effectiveness through their use of strategic management systems and processes. These principals demonstrate how a well-managed building contributes to effective teaching and learning.

Accomplished principals develop strategic management systems that reflect the following steps:

- design and development: plan
- implementation: do
- monitoring: check
- continuous improvement: act

Design and Development: Plan

Accomplished principals lead the development of goals and objectives that are in line with the vision and mission. Those goals are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-specific. To reach these goals, they cultivate and advance management structures to sustain all the elements required for the organization to realize its learning goals, from human and fiscal resources to student achievement, student safety, and building management, leaving nothing to chance.

In doing so, accomplished principals manage the collective expertise at their sites to skillfully design and proactively craft systems and processes essential to maintaining highly effective organizations. They collaboratively lead the development of management structures that engender ownership, commitment, and transparency. These structures support accomplished principals in collaborating, communicating, and responding with foresight, intention, and efficiency.

Mindful of the disparate yet interrelated and interdependent aspects of the organization, accomplished principals make decisions understanding how systems affect one another. These principals collaborate with external and internal stakeholders to make informed decisions aimed at minimizing unintended consequences. For example, they are aware that a decision to adopt a new schedule will affect other systems, such as teacher planning time, state testing, lunch and bus schedules, and professional development, and they plan accordingly.

As part of the design and development process, accomplished principals properly orient all stakeholders to the need for strategic systems. These principals establish common language, understanding, and work norms. They implement strategic management systems that are calculated to support student learning by ensuring role clarity, enhancing organizational discipline, and increasing accountability for results.

Implementation: Do

Accomplished principals realize that effective implementation of systems will result in the alignment of goals, objectives, and resources and purposefully connect systems and processes. They continually reflect on whether the systems are being implemented as designed. These principals monitor goals and objectives to determine if they are achieved, and if so, are according to timelines and benchmarks and within budget. On the basis of their findings, these principals work collaboratively to identify solutions, define roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders, and establish expectations for performance and improvement.

Accomplished principals ensure that communication about systems and stakeholder access and utilization occurs on a timely basis. They strategically conduct public meetings and provide training for all internal and external stakeholders. For example, when introducing new technology for parents to access student information, such as grade reports, attendance, and discipline reports, these principals involve parents and the community in the implementation of the new initiative. All communications from these principals are intentional, clear, consistent, and focused on results.

Monitoring: Check

Accomplished principals consistently monitor the systems and processes against established goals and objectives, using all available resources and technologies. They design each monitoring effort to ensure equity and guarantee that all are justly served. These principals establish real-time and longitudinal data collection systems to monitor progress and trends to inform decisions. They develop processes and protocols for using the student data management system to monitor the instructional program effectively. They use the management structure to disaggregate data from all groups and determine further actions or interventions. For example, they may lead a gap analysis with teachers

to determine why a particular sub-population is achieving and another is not in relation to an established expectation. Accomplished principals analyze the results and use the findings about the root causes to develop a strategic plan and implement interventions.

When monitoring the performance of the organization, accomplished principals ask the following questions: “Are the depth, breadth, and definitions of the strategies sufficient to achieve the intended outcomes of high performance for all students? Are we on time, within budget, and on track for meeting or exceeding our established goals?” These principals continually monitor operational procedures to realize successful student performance. They use each step in the monitoring process to build greater ownership and commitment throughout the organization for the attainment of goals and objectives. After reviewing the process analytically and globally, these principals know whether or not to take action.

Continuous Improvement: Act

Through a collaborative approach, accomplished principals make needed adjustments and communicate them effectively, keeping the systems on track and aligned to organizational objectives. To support continuous improvement, these principals regularly review, evaluate, and re-examine systems and processes, identifying obstacles and barriers, and minimizing or eliminating them. Such principals collaboratively prioritize actions to arrive at what is critical to achieving the goals. They regularly review and evaluate formal and informal processes, to support continuous improvement. As the organization changes, accomplished principals make certain that the systems and processes continue to add value to the organization.

Accomplished principals use appropriate data to make informed decisions. Through a collaborative leadership structure, these principals collect and analyze data to determine appropriate action. They assume personal responsibility and provide leadership to the process. These principals take appropriate and corrective action, report the results to the stakeholders, and identify the progress made. They use their findings to justify resource requests and broadly communicate the current state of the organization to the learning community.

Reflections on Standard VI

STANDARD 6. PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

Effective leaders:

- a) Recruit, hire, support, develop, and retain effective and caring teachers and other professional staff and form them into an educationally effective faculty.
- b) Plan for and manage staff turnover and succession, providing opportunities for effective induction and mentoring of new personnel.
- c) Develop teachers' and staff members' professional knowledge, skills, and practice through differentiated opportunities for learning and growth, guided by understanding of professional and adult learning and development.
- d) Foster continuous improvement of individual and collective instructional capacity to achieve outcomes envisioned for each student.
- e) Deliver actionable feedback about instruction and other professional practice through valid, research-anchored systems of supervision and evaluation to support the development of teachers' and staff members' knowledge, skills, and practice.
- f) Empower and motivate teachers and staff to the highest levels of professional practice and to continuous learning and improvement.
- g) Develop the capacity, opportunities, and support for teacher leadership and leadership from other members of the school community.
- h) Promote the personal and professional health, well-being, and work-life balance of faculty and staff.
- i) Tend to their own learning and effectiveness through reflection, study, and improvement, maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

STANDARD 9. OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.

Effective leaders:

- a) Institute, manage, and monitor operations and administrative systems that promote the mission and vision of the school.
- b) Strategically manage staff resources, assigning and scheduling teachers and staff to roles and responsibilities that optimize their professional capacity to address each student’s learning needs.
- c) Seek, acquire, and manage fiscal, physical, and other resources to support curriculum, instruction, and assessment; student learning community; professional capacity and community; and family and community engagement.
- d) Are responsible, ethical, and accountable stewards of the school’s monetary and non-monetary resources, engaging in effective budgeting and accounting practices.
- e) Protect teachers’ and other staff members’ work and learning from disruption.
- f) Employ technology to improve the quality and efficiency of operations and management.
- g) Develop and maintain data and communication systems to deliver actionable information for classroom and school improvement.
- h) Know, comply with, and help the school community understand local, state, and federal laws, rights, policies, and regulations so as to promote student success.
- i) Develop and manage relationships with feeder and connecting schools for enrollment management and curricular and instructional articulation.
- j) Develop and manage productive relationships with the central office and school board.
- k) Develop and administer systems for fair and equitable management of conflict among students, faculty and staff, leaders, families, and community.
- l) Manage governance processes and internal and external politics toward achieving the school’s mission and vision.



Action-Based Conversations:

Facilitator’s Guide to Exploring Accomplished Practice in Leadership

Core Prop 4: Accomplished educational leaders are committed to student and adult learners and to their development.

(DRAFT National Board Standard 4: Knowledge of Students and Adults; PSEL Standards 6: Professional Capacity of School Personnel and Standard 7: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff)

Title: Tapping Into Resources, Recognizing Individuals, Fostering Continuous Improvement

Brief Description: Participants will delve into the needs of student and adult learning, exploring similarities and differences. They will then consider what the teacher needs to know and be able to do to be successful and work toward continuous improvement of practice in the NYS evaluation process using the NYS Teaching Standards.

“Leadership is leading learning. Accomplished principals are humble lead learners. They make their own learning a continuous and public part of the work of leading their school..... Through their actions, accomplished principals serve as a beacon and motivate each person to reach his or her greatest potential. They continually learn, model and mentor.”

~DRAFT National Board Principal Standards, pg. 14

Outcome-based objectives:

Objectives
Participants will understand the similarities and differences of student and adult learning needs.
Participants will consider the resources available in their context to support both adults and student needs.
Participants will develop language to support teachers in continuous improvement for instructional practice through the 5 Core Propositions and NYS Teaching Standards.

Length/Timing: 2 hours

Materials or Special Setup Required:

Chart paper, 2 colors of post-it notes, markers, index cards, highlighters, computer/LCD and ppt Draft NB Standard 4; What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do. NYS Teaching Standards and Core Prop Graphic Organizer

Process:

Steps and Time	Notes
Leaders will randomly be given a color index card. Blue: Identify a student (blue) or adult (green) you know is struggling in your building. What do you know about this individual? How do you know it? What resources might he/she need? Share with an elbow partner	~5 min



Accomplished Leadership Series

<p>Divide the participants into two groups. Students and Adults They will read their corresponding pages of Draft NB Standard 4. On two different color post-its as they read EACH GROUP will capture NEEDS and CHARACTERISTICS</p> <p>Discussion: How might those needs or characteristics be met? What evidence might be used or gathered?</p> <p>Organize post its by clustering similar items in one side of T-chart On the other side of the T-Chart add evidence</p>	~25 min
<p>Large group share out. What commonalities do you see across groups? What elements are unique to a group?</p>	~10 min
<p>Supporting your teachers starts with their beliefs: Jigsawing the 5 Core Propositions; Participants count off (1-5) and read their assigned Core Prop from the Green Book</p>	~10 min
<p>Discuss as a like group, This makes sense to me because.... How is could this be evidenced in a classroom?</p>	~10 min
<p>Discussing evidence: Graphic Organizer How does your Core Prop intersect with the 7 NYS Teaching Standards? Read across each row's NYS Standard & your CP. Pause after each section,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circle the verbs • To which Standard would this apply? • How do these actions demonstrate this NYS Standard? • What differences do you notice between this Core Proposition and the correlating NYS Standard? • How might knowledge of this CP inform conversations that you have with your teacher regarding their observations? 	~25 min
<p>Then group participants will create a poster capturing the essence of the Core Proposition and how it intersects with the NYS Teaching Standards</p>	~20 min
<p>Group Presentations of posters to Share and Discuss</p>	~20 min
<p>Exit Ticket:</p> <p>3) List three things you have learned about students needs and characteristics that impact their learning.</p> <p>2) List two things you would like to try when providing a teacher feedback and support to improve their instructional practice.</p> <p>1) List one comment you have about tapping in to available resources to support either students and/or adults. (10 minutes)</p>	

Source(s):

[Draft NB Standard 4](#); [What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do](#).
[NYS Teaching Standards and Core Prop Graphic Organizer](#)

Activity documented by: Colleen McDonald, NBCT



Accomplished Leadership Series

Elevating the Profession through Leadership: A New Professional Learning Series

LOCATION: DATE

NATIONAL BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS

National Board Core Propositions for Accomplished Educational Leaders™

NT3

1

Agenda:

- What do you Know?
- Standard 4: Knowing Students and Adults
- Commonalities and Unique Attributes
- The 5 Core: A Jigsaw
 - Brainstorming Evidence
 - Crosswalking with NYSTS
- Creating a Poster
- 3-2-1



Accomplished Leadership Series

2

Purpose: This series is designed for building leaders. This professional learning opportunity will provide rich, deep, collaborative action-based conversations to allow the personal and professional exploration of accomplished practice in leadership.



Essential Questions:

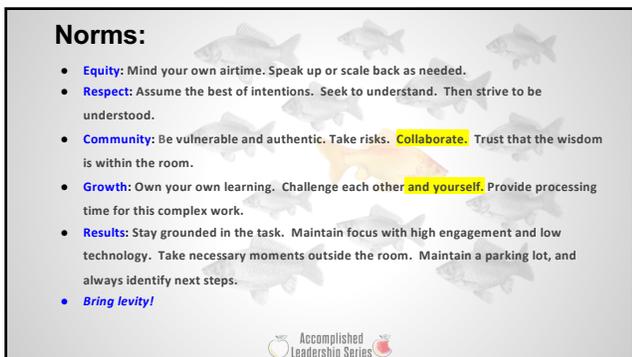
- What does accomplished leadership look like and sound like, in your building, with your population?
- What is the vision? How is it communicated?
- How is student and adult learning managed and monitored?
- How are collaborative partnerships built with families, stakeholders, and communities?

Accomplished Leadership Series

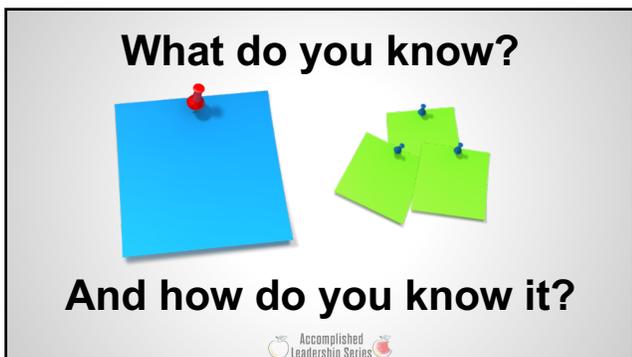
3



4



5



6

and Characteristics

How might these needs or characteristics be met? What evidence might be used or gathered?

Accomplished Leadership Series

7

Commonalities?

Uniqueness?

Accomplished Leadership Series

8

Jigsawing the 5 Core

What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do

NATIONAL BOARD

Accomplished Leadership Series

9

Take a few minutes to read your Core Proposition, then turn to your partner and discuss:

“This make sense to me because.....”



Accomplished Leadership Series

10

Graphic Organizer



Finding the Core

How might this be evidenced in the classroom?

Accomplished Leadership Series

11

Using chart paper:

- Capture the essence of the Core Prop and
- How it intersects with the NYS Teaching Standards.



Accomplished Leadership Series

12



13



14



15

Standard IV

Knowledge of Students and Adults

Accomplished principals ensure that each student and adult in the learning community is known and valued. These principals develop systems so that individuals are supported socially, emotionally, and intellectually, in their development, learning, and achievement.

Accomplished principals are keenly aware that building relationships is fundamental in establishing a positive learning environment. They value people as individuals. In the interest of valuing students and adults, these principals create systems and procedures that address the development, contexts, support needs, and accomplishments of both students and adults. They ensure that every student is connected consistently in meaningful ways with at least one caring adult advocate and that every adult is connected in meaningful ways with other adults.

In order to know students and adults well, accomplished principals create structures that involve the following:

Students

- understanding of child and adolescent development
- understanding of home structures
- scaffolding community support
- celebrating student accomplishments

Adults

- understanding of human development and learning theory
- understanding of adults in a broader context
- scaffolding support
- celebrating adult accomplishments

STUDENTS

Accomplished principals ensure that each student is known and valued. Regardless of the focus, size, demographics, or grade configuration of the learning community, these principals purposefully and intentionally design and implement systems and

procedures to engage each student. Accomplished principals communicate the resulting information to the staff. For example, they may create face-to-face or digital systems that enable horizontal and vertical teams to meet regularly to discuss students and problem solve for their benefit. To assure that every student has a consistent relationship with an adult, they may establish an advisory system, smaller learning communities within the larger one, or other support systems.

Understanding of Child and Adolescent Development

Accomplished principals are well versed in child and adolescent development theory and proven research. They anticipate and address students' emotional, psychological, and social needs and ensure that programs are in place to meet those needs. These principals empower students to become responsible and advocate for their own learning. They instill high expectations in students, so that students will have high aspirations for themselves and a personal sense of efficacy.

Accomplished principals make certain that each student is known as an individual with unique needs and strengths. They ensure that every student feels like an integral part of the learning organization and understands how their learning is important to themselves and to others. These principals reach out and make sure that opportunities exist for all students to feel that they belong, especially those who may be disengaged.

Understanding of Home Structures

Accomplished principals understand how integral the student's home environment is to his or her development. These principals appreciate the family and social dynamics of each student. They recognize each student as a member of a family or a personal network and as a community member. They honor diverse home structures and recognize the challenges some structures pose. These principals recognize potential bias in the learning community and intervene when practices may marginalize students. For example, for students who may not have a place to do their homework in the evening, these principals might establish opportunities to complete homework at alternative times and locations.

Accomplished principals capitalize on the strengths of families and personal networks, while providing interventions, support, and resources to meet students' needs. These principals create a system within the learning community to increase meaningful family involvement. For example, they might create a room with digital and print resources where parents or guardians can access information to support their children or their own learning. Accomplished principals create a culture in which parents or guardians feel welcome and essential to the learning environment. These principals may arrange for meetings with parents and guardians at flexible times and in such convenient locations as restaurants, apartments, or community centers.

Scaffolding Community Support

Accomplished principals understand the spectrum of student background and contexts and scaffold supports to respond to that diversity accordingly. These principals may enlist social programs, civic and community organizations, and faith-based groups as well as informal supports to provide resources to meet students' needs. Examples might include connecting students with programs that meet such needs as after-school food sources, health care services, employment opportunities, social services, and educational services.

Celebrating Student Accomplishments

Accomplished principals recognize and celebrate students' accomplishments. These principals create multiple opportunities for ongoing recognition of each student, whether through awards ceremonies, bulletin boards, broadcast announcements, or other means. They recognize and support each student to become confident as individuals and learners and to take ownership of and have pride in their learning community.

ADULTS

Accomplished principals ensure that each adult is known and valued. Regardless of the focus, size, demographics, or configuration of the learning community, these principals deliberately design and implement systems and procedures to engage each adult. They intentionally and purposefully build trusting relationships, enabling them to have conversations that are courageous and honest.

Accomplished principals actively listen, observe, and value the power of meaningful communication with adults. They understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across diverse cultures. These principals stay abreast of the personal and professional interests of staff members. They establish routines that foster rich relationships in which all have the opportunity to interact. These opportunities may include one-on-one conferences and other formal and informal interactions.

Understanding of Human Development and Learning Theory

Accomplished principals apply their understanding of adult learning theory and human development, acknowledging what each person brings and how each person's social construct affects the learning environment. These principals create organizations of high purpose and energy. Accomplished principals ensure that each adult is an appreciated, contributing member. Accomplished principals create and maintain both formal and informal structures in order to foster positive relationships among adults.

Accomplished principals appreciate each individual's unique needs and strengths and consider him or her when planning activities and events. These principals ensure that every adult feels like an integral part of the learning community and

understands how his or her learning is important to them personally and to others. They differentiate staff members' professional development based on interests, needs, and technological expertise.

Accomplished principals reinforce high expectations for adults, so adults will have high aspirations for themselves and a personal sense of efficacy. For example, adults who feel a sense of belonging might collaborate with peers to create new classes or teaching arrangements.

Understanding of Adults in a Broader Context

Knowing that a well-grounded faculty is the hallmark of an effective learning environment, accomplished principals support personnel in balancing the demands of the work environment, the home environment, extracurricular activities, and professional study. They do this by establishing relationships with everyone in the building. For example, these principals are aware of key events and dates that are meaningful to individual staff members. Accomplished principals recognize and acknowledge their own obligations and limitations in nurturing relationships. They do not show bias or favoritism.

Accomplished principals work to maintain relationships by being visible throughout the building, by making a concerted effort to converse daily with staff members, and by being familiar with the family dynamics of the staff. For example, they may facilitate social events at which families can get to know one another. They provide support as needed in individual circumstances. When assigning duties, they consider personal circumstances and make appropriate individual accommodations available when it does not negatively affect the learning environment.

Scaffolding Support

Accomplished principals understand that adults function in a world beyond the learning community. Therefore, these principals support adults by scaffolding resources from social, civic, community, and faith-based groups. They know individuals well enough to understand why a particular adult may not be performing well, and whether that person needs assistance. These principals understand that underperformance may occur because of a variety of professional and personal factors and counsel individuals when they perceive changes in demeanor or performance. For example, these principals might help locate resources for a teacher experiencing financial difficulties because of a family member's illness or a spouse's job loss.

New York State Teaching Standards
Aligned to the National Board's Five Core Propositions, Danielson, and the National Board Standards Study Bundles

National Board's Five Core Propositions of Accomplished Teaching ----- NYS Teaching Standards	Core Prop 1 Teachers are committed to students and their learning.	Core Prop 2 Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students	Core Prop 3 Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring students' learning	Core Prop 4 Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.	Core Prop 5 Teachers are members of learning communities	National Board Teaching Standards
<p>Standard 1 <i>Knowledge of Students and Student Learning</i></p> <p>Teachers acquire knowledge of each student and demonstrate knowledge of student development and learning to promote achievement for all students.</p> <p><i>(Danielson Frameworks for Teaching Domain 1)*</i></p>	Understands each student has different cognitive strengths					Knowledge of Students Equity Content Knowledge Advocacy
<p>Standard 2 <i>Knowledge of Content and Instructional Planning</i></p> <p>Teachers know the content they are responsible for teaching and plan instruction that ensures growth and achievement for all students.</p> <p><i>(Danielson Frameworks for Teaching Domain 1)*</i></p>	Creates an environment of respect and rapport where students are comfortable taking risk	Understands how knowledge in their content area is created, organized, and linked to other disciplines				Knowledge of Students Content Knowledge Instructional Practice Equity
<p>Standard 3 <i>Instructional Practice</i></p> <p>Teachers implement instruction that engages and challenges all students to meet or exceed the learning standards.</p> <p><i>(Danielson Frameworks for Teaching Domain 3)*</i></p>	Established 2 way communication with students	Established 2 way communication with students		Established 2 way communication with students		Instructional Practice Equity Collaboration

*Charlotte Danielson Frameworks for Teaching Domain indicated in italics.

New York State Teaching Standards
Aligned to the National Board's Five Core Propositions, Danielson, and the National Board Standards Study Bundles

<p>Standard 4 Learning Environment</p> <p>Teachers work with all students to create a dynamic learning environment that supports achievement and growth.</p> <p><i>(Danielson Frameworks for Teaching Domain 2)*</i></p>						<p>Learning Environment</p> <p>Instructional Practice</p> <p>Equity</p>
<p>Standard 5 Assessment for Student Learning</p> <p>Teachers use multiple measures to assess and document student growth, evaluate instructional effectiveness, and modify instruction.</p> <p><i>(Danielson Frameworks for Teaching Domain 3)*</i></p>						<p>Assessment</p> <p>Knowledge of Students</p> <p>Content Knowledge</p>
<p>Standard 6 Professional Responsibilities and Collaboration</p> <p>Teachers demonstrate professional responsibility and engage relevant stakeholders to maximize student growth, development, and learning.</p> <p><i>(Danielson Frameworks for Teaching Domain 4)*</i></p>						<p>Reflection</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Advocacy</p>
<p>NYSUT Standard 7 Professional Growth</p> <p>Teachers set informed goals and strive for continuous professional growth.</p> <p><i>(Danielson Frameworks for Teaching Domain 4)*</i></p>						<p>Reflection</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Collaboration</p>

*Charlotte Danielson Frameworks for Teaching Domain indicated in italics.

STANDARD 5. COMMUNITY OF CARE AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.

Effective leaders:

- a) Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy school environment that meets that the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student.
- b) Create and sustain a school environment in which each student is known, accepted and valued, trusted and respected, cared for, and encouraged to be an active and responsible member of the school community.
- c) Provide coherent systems of academic and social supports, services, extracurricular activities, and accommodations to meet the range of learning needs of each student.
- d) Promote adult-student, student-peer, and school-community relationships that value and support academic learning and positive social and emotional development.
- e) Cultivate and reinforce student engagement in school and positive student conduct.
- f) Infuse the school's learning environment with the cultures and languages of the school's community.

What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do

TEACHERS ARE COMMITTED TO STUDENTS AND THEIR LEARNING | TEACHERS KNOW THE SUBJECTS
THEY TEACH AND HOW TO TEACH THOSE SUBJECTS TO STUDENTS | TEACHERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR
MANAGING AND MONITORING STUDENT LEARNING | TEACHERS THINK SYSTEMATICALLY ABOUT THEIR
PRACTICE AND LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE | TEACHERS ARE MEMBERS OF LEARNING COMMUNITIES

THE FIVE CORE PROPOSITIONS

1. TEACHERS ARE COMMITTED TO STUDENTS AND THEIR LEARNING.
2. TEACHERS KNOW THE SUBJECTS THEY TEACH AND HOW TO TEACH THOSE SUBJECTS TO STUDENTS.
3. TEACHERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING AND MONITORING STUDENT LEARNING.
4. TEACHERS THINK SYSTEMATICALLY ABOUT THEIR PRACTICE AND LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE.
5. TEACHERS ARE MEMBERS OF LEARNING COMMUNITIES.

PREFACE

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

LEE S. SHULMAN

PREFACE

Pundits are fond of saying that “necessity is the mother of invention.” With the National Board as its primary exemplar, I prefer to think that dreams are the mothers of invention. Audacity and courage are its siblings.

Early one morning in the late summer of 1985, I received a phone call from Marc Tucker, then staff director of the Carnegie Corporation’s Task Force on Teaching as a Profession. He asked if I could prepare a report describing what a National Board for America’s teachers might look like in the unlikely event that it could be created and sustained. It became clear that such a feat would call for new conceptions of teaching, utterly new technologies of teacher testing and assessment and the creation of a new kind of non-governmental organization

that would be neither a union nor a government agency. Suspending our sense of disbelief, I asked Gary Sykes—then a doctoral candidate at Stanford—to join in this act of creative thinking and writing. We set out to imagine a new institution, owned and operated by America’s most accomplished teachers, designing standards and inventing forms of assessment that had never existed before.

When we began to dream that dream and discussed it with colleagues, our visions were initially dismissed as hallucinations, as fantasies without a needed grounding in reality. The very idea of treating teachers as true professionals with clear standards and the capacity to take responsibility for the quality of their own work seemed absurd to many of our critics. While fields like medicine,

law and architecture had developed such boards, teaching was a very different kind of work, perhaps not even a real profession.

And if that idea were not sufficiently absurd, the insane notion of disdaining the “tried-and-true” methods of testing and replacing them with alternatives that were closer to practice was deemed foolhardy. Indeed, when the vision of a portfolio-based assessment that could be both pedagogically authentic and psychometrically sound was put forward, even some of our earlier supporters grew pale.

As we worked collaboratively with the first generation of teacher leaders who would ultimately become the majority of the National Board’s board of directors, we also insisted that whatever assessment method was used, it needed to show promise as a positive influence on the continuing professional development of the teachers who elected to become candidates. Measurement precision was not enough. If we were going to ask the nation’s finest teachers to dedicate their limited time to the development of a portfolio of their practice, that process had to be educative for the teachers or it would be a disservice to the profession. And if support systems or coaching services were created to help candidates perform at a higher level for their portfolios, that would be fine because the only way to do better on the assessment would be to become

even more accomplished as a teacher. Indeed, we urged that the ideal preparation for the assessment be mentorship support from Board-certified teachers because of the promise this kind of coaching process held for improving the quality of practice.

As the National Board took shape, educators in other countries took interest. The one assumption that many of us found most difficult to disabuse was that this activity had to be a government process, controlled and overseen by officials of departments or ministries of education. Our colleagues in other countries could not imagine that something this ambitious, this pioneering, this expensive, and having such a direct impact on national educational policy, could be led by a professional organization of teachers that was not controlled by national or state governments.

The original research and development effort I described took place between 1985 and 1990. During that period, the board as we know it was established. A great deal has happened since the work began. When the number of NBCTs crossed the 100,000 mark, it became clear our dream was no longer a fantasy, our ambitions no longer a hallucination.

This seminal text is organized around a mantra that is by now well known in the teaching world. “What

should teachers know and be able to do?” Hence, the standards for accomplished teaching encompass both the habits of mind needed by outstanding teachers—their knowledge, strategies, grasp of subject matter and understanding of developing kids—and also their skills, the technical “habits of practice” that accomplished professionals in every field of practice have honed and developed. Knowing and Doing are the hallmarks of deep professional achievement.

Nevertheless, in addition to knowing and doing, to habits of mind and habits of practice, Board-certified teachers are also identified by habits of the heart, as the kinds of human beings whom we trust and to whom we entrust the children of our communities. We trust them to use their knowledge and skills for the benefit of their students, their communities, and their society. In its fullest form, as you read the pages that follow, you will see that our characterization of the accomplished teacher is defined by what teachers should know and be able to do, as well what kind of human being they should strive to be.

During a study of how America’s engineers should be prepared, I asked a group of engineering students who were completing their undergraduate preparation how they would respond to someone’s question, “What is an engineer?” The response they gave provides a useful reminder of how we,

as teachers, might view our roles as professionals. Engineering students said, “As engineers we use math and the sciences to mess with the world by designing and making things that people will buy and use...and once you mess with the world, you’re responsible for the mess you’ve made.”

What then is a teacher? As teachers we use the many sources of professional knowledge, skill and experience at our disposal to engage the minds and hearts of children and youth by teaching and inspiring them. And once we mess with minds and hearts, we are prepared to take responsibility for the messes we have made, the dreams we inspired, the minds we have brought to life, the prejudices we have forestalled, and the society to which we have given hope.

And yet, there’s a deeper sense of what it means to take responsibility for the messes that we are destined, nay obligated, to make. We are obliged as teachers to do everything we can to become smarter about our subjects, our students, and our work, more skilled in the pursuit of our practice, and more ethical, self-aware and empathic as human beings that our society trusts to mess with minds and hearts. The National Board exemplifies how we as members of the professional teaching community take that responsibility.

Thirty years passed. And thus, one morning in 2016, I received an email from the new president and CEO of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards suggesting we meet over breakfast in Palo Alto. Peggy Brookins, a National Board-certified teacher of high school mathematics, was now president and CEO of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, an organization that has certified more than 112,000 teachers across all 50 states and DC. Peggy asked if I would revisit that newborn infant that began its life three decades ago and prepare a personal preface to this volume. I revisited the dream. Teaching portfolios, for example, were no longer a weird anomaly destined to be buried by traditional forms of assessment. The idea that teachers could be evaluated using professional standards created by teachers, for teachers

as adapted to the situations in which they taught was no longer a fantasy. The letters “NBCT” after a teacher’s name is the highest honor a member of the profession can attain.

“What” is the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards? That is the question this brief volume promises to answer. It’s a deceptively simple question with exciting and inspiring answers that, at least for me, extend back in time for 30 years. I am now confident that its life expectancy is unlimited, as is its potential for bringing about a significant improvement in the countenance of American education.

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BY TEACHERS, FOR TEACHERS

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was founded in 1987 to advance the quality of teaching and learning by:

- maintaining high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do;
- providing a national voluntary system certifying teachers who meet these standards; and
- advocating related education reforms to integrate National Board Certification in American education and to capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers.

This second edition of *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do* articulates the National Board's Five Core Propositions for teaching. Similar to medicine's Hippocratic Oath, the Five Core Propositions

are held in common by teachers of all grade levels and disciplines and underscore the accomplished teacher's commitment to advancing student learning and achievement. Together, the propositions form the basis of all National Board Standards, which describe how teachers enact the Propositions in particular content areas and with students of particular developmental levels, and serve as the foundation for Board certification. National Board Certification—created by teachers, for teachers—is the profession's mark of accomplished teaching.

The explication of the Five Core Propositions in this edition of *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do* was updated in 2015 to reflect advances in the field in research, professional language, and practice. Remarkably, the Propositions themselves

have stood the test of time. The stability of the Five Core Propositions is an indication of the teaching profession's ability to create and maintain a body of knowledge that guides practice. Stylistic revisions were made to the explication of each proposition to ensure the text resonates with modern ears, and updates to the content include a stronger emphasis on the roles that technology and language play in students' lives.

When *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do* was first written in 1989, there were no National Board Certified Teachers. The Five Core Propositions established in that document anchored the development of peer-reviewed standards and assessments for Board certification in 25 certificate areas. As a testament to the strength of that visionary document, we can now say that over 700 Board-certified teachers contributed to the updated explication of the Five Core Propositions. They participated in the comment period, providing practice-based evaluations of the extent to which the descriptions of the Propositions have stood the test of time; they served on National Board's staff, Certification Council, and Board of Directors, shepherding the revision process; and they made up the entirety of the committee that oversaw the revisions, basing their decisions on the comment period findings, research, and their considerable experience with students.

A distinguishing hallmark of a profession is that those who are in it determine what its members must know and do. For this reason, how these revisions took place is as important as the revisions themselves. As is the case with all National Board Standards, the updated Five Core Propositions were written by teachers, for teachers. The Five Core Propositions—in content and in authorship—are a statement of what our profession stands for.

THE FIVE CORE PROPOSITIONS

Through National Board Certification, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards seeks to identify and recognize teachers who effectively enhance student learning and demonstrate the high level of knowledge, skills, abilities and commitments reflected in the following Five Core Propositions.

THE FIVE CORE PROPOSITIONS

1. TEACHERS ARE COMMITTED TO STUDENTS AND THEIR LEARNING.

2. TEACHERS KNOW THE SUBJECTS THEY TEACH AND HOW TO TEACH THOSE SUBJECTS TO STUDENTS.
3. TEACHERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING AND MONITORING STUDENT LEARNING.
4. TEACHERS THINK SYSTEMATICALLY ABOUT THEIR PRACTICE AND LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE.
5. TEACHERS ARE MEMBERS OF LEARNING COMMUNITIES.

PROPOSITION #1

Accomplished teachers base their practice on the fundamental belief that all students can learn and meet high expectations. Acknowledging the distinctive traits and talents of each learner, teachers are dedicated to and skilled at making knowledge accessible to all students. Educators are thus passionate about building meaningful relationships with young people so students can advance their understanding and experience success. Teachers know that ongoing achievement depends on their conviction in the value and dignity of all human beings as well as the potential that exists within each child. They therefore remain attentive to human variability, its influence on learning, and the interconnectedness of people in different contexts. Accomplished teachers become acquainted with students across

social and educational settings, not simply within their own learning environments.

Teachers Recognize Individual Differences in Their Students and Adjust Their Practice Accordingly

Teachers must know many things about the students they instruct so they can respond effectively to individual differences. For instance, one teacher may find that in her class, Alex works with a speech pathologist, Maria loves science fiction, Toby is anxious about mathematics, and Mikayla is captivated by music. Yet, accomplished teachers know much more about their students, such as where they call home, what their families¹ are like, how they

¹ The terms “family” and “parent” are used throughout this document to refer to people who are the primary caregivers, guardians, or significant adults in the lives of children.

performed academically in the past, and who they want to become in the future. Children and young adults live in a wide variety of physical locations and household groups; to understand their hopes and aspirations, educators must remain attuned to students' unique living situations and family dynamics.

Accomplished teachers further understand that student learning is influenced by personality—whether a student is shy or outgoing, impulsive or reflective, stubborn or eager to please. For example, a shy student might not perform well on an oral presentation. Similarly, an impulsive student who fills in answers hastily may receive standardized test results that do not truly reflect his or her knowledge. Accomplished educators take personality traits such as those into consideration when interacting with students, planning for instruction, and interpreting assessments. That kind of specific understanding is critical, for teachers use it constantly to tailor instruction for the individuals within their classrooms.²

Teachers who are accomplished respond to student needs based on their pupils' interests, abilities, and

prior knowledge. When planning a unit on genetics, for instance, a biology instructor will anticipate which concepts and activities certain students may find problematic; while listening to a small group, the teacher will then look for signs of individual student engagement and address any misunderstandings as they arise. By keeping a finger on the pulse of the class, educators decide when to alter plans, work with individual students, or enrich instruction with additional examples, explanations, or activities.

Recognizing that students bring different language practices and proficiencies to the classroom, accomplished teachers also understand the complex role that language plays in learning. For example, they respect the knowledge, perspectives, and experiences that English language learners possess and value the ways in which those factors can enhance and strengthen the learning environment. Similarly, educators know that students use language differently based on social or academic context, and accomplished teachers empower their students by providing them with access points for participating in various situations and occasions. Educators

— “ —

Teachers must become attuned to their students' individual situations and changing circumstances.

² All references to classrooms in this document, whether stated explicitly or not, refer to all educational settings (e.g., laboratories, gymnasiums, libraries, offices, outdoor locations).

explore opportunities to integrate diverse language practices meaningfully within the learning process.

Accomplished teachers gain knowledge about their students by studying them carefully and seeking additional information from various sources. They learn from experience by listening to students, watching them interact with peers, observing them work in different contexts, reading their thoughts and reflections, and otherwise examining their actions and behavior in the learning environment. Teachers also look closely at how students play so they can encourage those students to explore their imagination during instruction. By engaging students on a social, emotional, intellectual, and physical basis, accomplished teachers enhance learning at every age and developmental level. To inform their pedagogical decisions further, educators analyze assessment data as well, considering it alongside input they receive from family members and other adults involved in their students' lives.

Such an extensive evaluation represents no easy feat. What teachers are able to see, hear, and learn about students is influenced by their prior knowledge and experience as professionals. When working with children and young adults who have different backgrounds and experiences from their own, accomplished teachers therefore monitor their impressions and thoughts carefully to acquire a

deep understanding of their students and the communities that shape their students' values, outlooks, and attitudes toward learning. All the information that teachers acquire about students through the course of instruction subsequently informs their understanding of teaching and learning, which transforms their practice.

Teachers Understand How Students Develop and Learn

In addition to attaining knowledge specific to their students, accomplished educators consult a variety of learning and development theories to make informed decisions about instructional content and teaching methods. They are familiar with concepts about teaching and learning generated by social and cognitive scientists. Moreover, educators integrate that knowledge with personal theories about learning and development generated from their own practice. Based on their theoretical knowledge and practical experience in the classroom, accomplished teachers understand that each student has different cognitive strengths. Educators determine how to capitalize on those assets as they consider how best to nurture their students' abilities and aptitudes.

Accomplished teachers provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge

and showcase their abilities, both in and out of traditional school settings. For example, students who find the calculation of percentages challenging in school may be able to determine value discounts readily while shopping—a mathematics instructor may thus incorporate that activity within an exercise to provide students with an alternate way to demonstrate their knowledge and improve their abilities. Accomplished teachers strive to appreciate and understand their students' aptitudes and intelligences.

By encouraging students to relate their personal experience to the classroom environment, teachers help students make learning relevant and advance their skills across academic settings.

Importantly, accomplished teachers recognize that, in a multicultural world, students possess a wide range of abilities and aptitudes that might be valued differently by families, local communities, and schools. For instance, the knowledge, skills, and dispositions nurtured in a Native American community may differ from those promoted in a Latino community. Similarly, those cultivated by a suburban community may differ from those developed in an

urban community. That said, people share important similarities as well, regardless of their social affiliation or cultural background. Those similarities and differences are always shifting.



Accomplished teachers therefore use everything they know about effective—and ineffective—practices to develop strategies that capitalize on their students' varied backgrounds, using diversity to enrich the learning environment for every student.

Thus, teachers must become attuned to their students' individual situations and changing circumstances. By doing so, accomplished teachers can develop an array of strategies for sharing differences, identifying similarities, and embracing diversity within the learning environment. Those strategies provide educational experiences that capitalize on classroom diversity by connecting students with various cultural experiences while broadening their perspectives on learning and thinking.

Teachers Treat Students Equitably

As advocates for the interests of students, accomplished teachers are vigilant in ensuring that all pupils receive their fair share of attention. Educators recognize their own biases and make certain that any preconceptions based on real or perceived ability differences, exceptionalities, socioeconomic or cultural background, family configuration, sexual

orientation, physical characteristics, race, ethnicity, language, religion, age, or gender do not distort their relationships with students. Accomplished teachers maintain an open mind and a balanced perspective on their students.

That approach does not suggest that teachers treat all students alike, because using the same tactics to address similar behavior by different students does not necessarily result in an equitable education. Rather, teachers respond to differences among students, being careful to counter potential inequities and avoid favoritism. Accomplished educators monitor their students' access to resources and advocate to ensure that students have the tools they need to learn. That level of attention requires a well-tuned alertness, which can be difficult. Accomplished teachers therefore use everything they know about effective—and ineffective—practices to develop strategies that capitalize on their students' varied backgrounds, using diversity to enrich the learning environment for every student.

Teachers Know Their Mission Transcends the Cognitive Development of Their Students

Accomplished teachers are devoted to supporting the development of character and preparing students for a successful future. To facilitate such growth, educators recognize that failure is a natural

part of the learning process; they show students how to cope with it and create environments in which learners are comfortable taking risks. Through failure, children and young adults can attain perseverance and resilience, which will help them achieve their potential. At the same time, accomplished teachers increase their students' engagement and motivation by providing them with options from which to choose, fostering their ownership in learning, and setting high expectations. Students come to understand that questioning and goal setting are integral aspects of the learning process.

Teachers model all those behaviors, using them to help students advocate for themselves in the classroom and in the community. As participants of a larger world, the students of accomplished teachers recognize the effect that their actions have outside the classroom. They therefore develop civic responsibility and digital citizenship, becoming aware of how their actions affect others. All those lessons—important in their own right—are essential to intellectual development as well. Accomplished teachers consider their students' potential in that broader sense when making decisions about what and how to teach.

THE FIVE CORE PROPOSITIONS

1. TEACHERS ARE COMMITTED TO STUDENTS AND THEIR LEARNING.

**2. TEACHERS KNOW THE
SUBJECTS THEY TEACH
AND HOW TO TEACH
THOSE SUBJECTS TO
STUDENTS.**

3. TEACHERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING AND MONITORING STUDENT LEARNING.

4. TEACHERS THINK SYSTEMATICALLY ABOUT THEIR PRACTICE AND LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE.

5. TEACHERS ARE MEMBERS OF LEARNING COMMUNITIES.

PROPOSITION #2

If one cardinal principle of teaching is a commitment to the welfare and education of young people, another is a commitment to subject matter. Accomplished teachers are dedicated to acquainting students with the social, cultural, ethical, and physical worlds in which we live, and they use the subjects they teach as an introduction to those realms. A comprehensive understanding of subject matter entails more than the recitation of dates, multiplication tables, or grammatical rules within a single content domain. Rather, it requires the pursuit of substantive knowledge by exploring domains and making connections to become fully engaged in the learning process.

Teachers Appreciate How Knowledge in Their Subjects is Created, Organized, and Linked to Other Disciplines

Teachers who possess a firm command of their subject areas understand factual information as well as major themes and concepts. They also comprehend the process of creative investigation and inquiry, whereby discoveries are made and new knowledge is formed, as demonstrated in the work of scholars and artists. For instance, physics teachers know the role of hypothesis generation and experimentation in scientific inquiry; geometry teachers know the modes of justification for substantiating mathematical claims; fine arts teachers understand how creative ideas are developed and meaning is conveyed through performance; social studies teachers know how historians use evidence

to interpret past events; and English language arts teachers understand the relationship between reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Literacy, a foundational component of learning across content domains, is instrumental to comprehending subject matter and connecting one discipline to another.

Accomplished teachers value the relationships among subject areas, using those relationships to forge multiple paths to knowledge. Thus, early and middle childhood generalists know about geography and its relationship to economics and history, and world language teachers know how political history and human migration inform an appreciation of language and culture. As those examples illustrate, accomplished teachers understand not only how content areas relate but also how they influence student learning.

Recognizing how knowledge is established within and across subject areas is crucial to the instruction of logical reasoning. Critical thinking does not occur in the abstract, for thinkers always evaluate something. Accomplished teachers realize the fundamental role that disciplinary study plays in the development of critical analysis and conceptual

understanding. Knowing that multiple perspectives and interpretations of each content area exist, educators expose students to different modes of critical thinking and show them how to reason ana-

lytically about subject matter. While maintaining the integrity of disciplinary methods, content, and structures of organization, accomplished teachers encourage students to question prevailing norms and assumptions so they can think for themselves.



Whether they are specialists or generalists, accomplished teachers use rich, complex subject matter to promote student learning across developmental levels.

Whether they are specialists or generalists, accomplished teachers use rich, complex subject matter to promote student learning across developmental levels. By engaging children and young adults in a broad array of disciplines, educators provide students with appropriate points of entry to appreciate the content. For example, early childhood generalists may not delve as deeply into cellular structure as high school biology teachers do, but they present foundational knowledge that introduces students to the joys of discovery, while inspiring a desire to explore the natural world in which they live. Similarly, physical education teachers may focus on locomotor movement—such as walking, hopping, or skipping—to help students with moderate and profound physical limitations develop gross motor

skills and achieve maximum independence. Teachers must possess a thorough understanding of subject matter to help their students develop critical skills and pursue lifelong learning—the hallmark of accomplished teaching at every developmental level.

Teachers Command Specialized Knowledge of How to Convey a Subject to Students

Teachers require pedagogical insight to communicate their subject knowledge effectively and impact students significantly. Accomplished educators use a specialized set of technical skills and abilities to convey instructional content and facilitate learning so students can develop bodies of knowledge and advance their systems of thinking. Pedagogical expertise incorporates wisdom related to the teaching and learning processes, as well as the dynamic between student needs and content demands. Accomplished teachers use their knowledge of the most appropriate ways to present subject matter through strategies and techniques such as demonstrations, experiments, analogies and metaphors, interactive learning, and appropriate uses of technology.

Pedagogical experience yields a repertoire of instructional techniques that allow teachers to share their subject matter knowledge with students.

Teachers draw on pedagogical and subject matter understandings to respond to common misconceptions within content areas; address challenging aspects of learning acquisition; and accommodate prior knowledge, experience, and skills that students at different developmental levels typically bring to the classroom. For example, science teachers anticipate that some students may have misunderstandings about gravity that can influence their learning, whereas fine arts and physical education teachers are prepared for young children to enter school at various stages of maturity with respect to hand–eye coordination. Balancing the insights of pedagogical and subject matter expertise helps teachers evaluate and resolve daily issues—decisions that include which aspects of subject matter to emphasize and how to pace instruction. Accomplished educators use a comprehensive awareness of their students, their subjects, and their practice to structure teaching that promotes learning in their schools.

To remain as effective as possible in the classroom, accomplished educators also demonstrate a strong commitment to learning about new curricular resources, such as textbook series, primary texts, classroom manipulatives, or research materials available through professional organizations. Educators keep abreast of technological developments that have implications for their subject areas

and their teaching, utilizing digital tools employed within their disciplines. Teachers understand that maintaining familiarity with the technology used by practitioners helps them remain current in their fields. In addition, they explore the influence that technology has on their subject areas because they know that it frequently affects the structure and process of thinking within disciplines. Importantly, accomplished teachers position themselves as critical users of technology, ensuring that it is employed to enhance student understanding. By modeling that stance, teachers help their students navigate the relationship between technology and learning, empowering them to use digital tools in authentic ways that advance their knowledge. Educators continually evaluate the usefulness of all curricular materials and pedagogical methods they adopt in the classroom, basing that evaluation on their professional judgment.

Teachers Generate Multiple Paths to Knowledge

Accomplished teachers wisely use the educational resources, pedagogical skills, and content knowledge they possess, varying their approach in the

classroom to meet learning goals and accommodate student dispositions as needed. Educators are thus aware of the value that lies in both structured and inductive learning. They understand that teaching students the concepts and principles that scholars within each discipline have generated is useful, but accomplished teachers also know that helping students develop a critical mindset is important. Through inquiry, students search for problems, patterns, and solutions, making discoveries and advancing their own learning. Accomplished educators model those processes for students, showing them how to pose problems and work through alternative solutions, as well as how to examine the answers that others have found to similar problems.

Posing and solving problems is central to the development of true understanding. That process moves students far beyond a rote memorization of facts, an easy manipulation of formulas, or the facile repetition of a musical scale. Teaching for understanding requires students to integrate discrete components of knowledge within their habits of thinking, instead of storing fragmented pieces of information without further consideration. It challenges students to think

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Accomplished educators use a comprehensive awareness of their students, their subjects, and their practice to structure teaching that promotes learning in their schools.

in nonlinear ways, to approach issues from multiple vantage points, to weigh competing sets of criteria, and to evaluate the merits of multiple solutions. Thus, in the eyes of accomplished teachers, the acquisition of knowledge does not signify a lower form of understanding. Rather, it represents a distinctly intellectual undertaking—a rich, demanding, creative process calling on the strategic coordination of skills, abilities, and dispositions to develop a deeper, more discerning matrix of understanding. That mode of thinking encourages students to apply their knowledge to new and unfamiliar problems so they can continue exploring and advancing their understanding. As they share their knowledge in all its forms with students in the classroom, accomplished teachers appreciate that this way of thinking and understanding will develop over time to support meaningful, substantial learning for a lifetime.

THE FIVE CORE PROPOSITIONS

1. TEACHERS ARE COMMITTED TO STUDENTS AND THEIR LEARNING.
 2. TEACHERS KNOW THE SUBJECTS THEY TEACH AND HOW TO TEACH THOSE SUBJECTS TO STUDENTS.
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3. TEACHERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING AND MONITORING STUDENT LEARNING.

4. TEACHERS THINK SYSTEMATICALLY ABOUT THEIR PRACTICE AND LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE.
5. TEACHERS ARE MEMBERS OF LEARNING COMMUNITIES.

PROPOSITION #3

Accomplished teachers maintain high expectations for all students. They view themselves as facilitators of student learning, helping children and young adults reach their fullest potential. To achieve that goal, educators create vibrant, productive workspaces for their students, adjusting and improving organizational structures as needed while establishing effective ways to monitor and manage traditional and nontraditional learning environments.

First and foremost, teachers facilitate the educational process by designing opportunities for learning—planning for and presenting students with inspiring material, promoting their participation, supporting substantive discourse, and sustaining long-term engagement by collaboratively working with students. To track their success, teachers carefully monitor activity within the learning

environment—observing student interactions, evaluating classroom performance, assessing all aspects of student development, and measuring learning outcomes relative to objectives. To increase students' success, teachers diligently manage the systems, programs, and resources that support every educational endeavor—fostering positive relationships in and out of the classroom, making sure classroom materials are used appropriately, maintaining schedules, ensuring student safety, and otherwise maintaining all aspects of a well-functioning learning environment. As masters of pedagogical practice, accomplished educators teach efficiently, making the most of every instructional moment to maximize learning. They are dedicated to helping young people thrive by respecting, encouraging, and advancing student interests and student learning at all times.

Teachers Call on Multiple Methods to Meet Their Instructional Goals

Accomplished teachers possess a range of pedagogical skills—for instance, they facilitate student inquiry, advise cooperative learning groups, and mediate classroom discourse. Their instructional strategies are largely informed by their students and their subject matter, although professional knowledge also guides their practice significantly. Thus, accomplished teachers understand what they and their students can reasonably achieve in a roundtable discussion, when they should hold back and allow students to determine their own solutions, and which questions they can pose to provoke the most thoughtful classroom conversation. Importantly, effective educators possess a comprehensive knowledge of instructional methods, broad and deep in scope. They have a strong theoretical understanding of various instructional modes and sound practical experience implementing these strategies. Accomplished teachers examine pedagogical issues regularly and reflect on their practice so that they use classroom time constructively.

Because students have diverse learning styles

and educational settings offer distinct learning opportunities, accomplished teachers know how and when to alter the organizational structure of their classroom environments to support instructional objectives. They transition among teaching methods, social groupings, and physical layouts to customize their approach, and they develop strategies based on learning goals and student needs. For example, depending on instructional objectives, outdoor experiments or classroom simulations may

be more productive for students than would a lecture or a discussion. Alternately, in some instances, journaling or note taking might be a more effective way to engage students in thinking and learning than would discovery-based

activities or dramatic performances. Accomplished educators understand the full breadth of pedagogical options available to them. They use traditional methods, and they employ innovative strategies to advance student learning in pace with the dynamic conditions of the classroom.

When shifting their approach, accomplished teachers modify their learning environments and their instructional materials as needed. To inspire students further, teachers invite stakeholders and colleagues to the classroom so they can share their

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To increase students' success, teachers diligently manage the systems, programs, and resources that support every educational endeavor.

experience and communicate their expertise on specific topics. Accomplished educators appreciate how the knowledge and skills of other individuals can complement their own talents and enhance their students' understanding. They know the value of mobilizing students as peer tutors for the same reason. Accomplished educators thus enlist a wide range of support—from students, teachers, and paraprofessionals to family and community members—to provide their students with instructional opportunities that will augment their learning.

Accomplished teachers understand the strengths and weaknesses of the pedagogical approaches they take, as well as their suitability for different students and student groups. The settings that teachers design, the situations they create, and the strategies they select are all grounded in educational research and professional experience. For accomplished educators, the classroom represents a world of opportunities. One activity can lead to the possibility of many others that will engage students and entice them to explore subjects further, sometimes with their teacher, sometimes with each other, and sometimes alone.

Teachers Support Student Learning in Varied Settings and Groups

Accomplished teachers know how to work with

different groups of students. They manage those interactions carefully, establishing social norms for constructive communication, helping students adopt productive roles vis-à-vis their teachers and their peers, and showing students how to assume responsibility for their learning and for that of their classmates. The environments that teachers create guide student behavior and support learning as it takes place in large or small groups, in pairs, independently, or one-on-one with the teacher or another adult.

Because different pedagogical techniques may also require different types of social interaction, each carrying its own set of expectations, accomplished teachers remain sensitive to shifting norms that cast students and teachers in new roles. To ensure that the learning dynamic remains positive and responsive, educators assess the relative value of classroom structures and organizational requirements when determining which instructional strategies will best enhance student learning in their classrooms. They continually search for new configurations that will prove effective, expand their repertoire, and keep students excited to learn. The management techniques that accomplished teachers use are proactive rather than reactive, helping classroom participants focus on learning instead of controlling disruptive behavior. Educators thus develop classroom customs and practices based

on their knowledge of students, social contexts, and learning objectives, as well as their prior experience.

Teachers Value Student Engagement

Accomplished teachers know how to keep students motivated by capturing their attention and immersing them in the learning process. Teachers understand that they can build bridges between what students know and what they are capable of learning by expanding old interests and sparking new passions. Accomplished educators therefore focus significant attention on developing strategies to promote student interests and to monitor student engagement.

Motivating students does not always mean that accomplished teachers make learning fun; learning can be difficult work. For instance, developing an acute sense of one's body during dance requires intense intellectual and physical concentration. Similarly, writing a short story requires drafting and re-drafting, editing and re-editing, as well as responding to critiques from teachers and peers. Teachers must know how to encourage their students in the face of serious challenges and provide them with support as they push themselves to new physical, affective, and intellectual planes. Accomplished teachers model strategies for dealing with the doubts that students may experience,

helping them realize that frustrating moments often are when learning occurs. Those moments produce the true joy of education, the satisfaction of accomplishment.

Teachers Regularly Assess Student Progress

Accomplished teachers monitor student performance as well as student engagement. Bearing considerable responsibility for the children and young adults they work with, educators examine the success of all activities they design. They assess learning experiences that they create or coordinate with the help of other educators, tracking what students do and do not learn while evaluating the effectiveness of their instructional strategies.

Assessment is not always done for the purpose of recording grades; rather, it allows students and teachers to examine their current status. Accomplished teachers evaluate students to determine what they have learned from instruction, whether that instruction is a week of lessons on life cycles, a unit of photography, or a semester of athletic training. Educators use those outcomes to decide if they should review skills within a topic, challenge students with a related concept, or advance to the next subject. They also help students engage in self-assessment, instilling them with a

sense of responsibility for their own learning. By adding to their repertoire of assessment methods and by monitoring student progress regularly, accomplished teachers provide students, families, caregivers—and themselves—with constructive feedback.

Importantly, accomplished teachers understand that the purpose of evaluation affects the form and structure of any assessment—the method of observation, the length of duration, and the type of information gathered. Those factors, along with student demeanor and motivation, all affect the conclusions that teachers may reach when using a specific assessment. Educators therefore monitor student progress using a variety of evaluation methods, each with its own set of strengths and weaknesses. Accomplished teachers analyze data from standardized examinations, and they design their own assessment tools. For instance, they define the content requirements for student portfolios, create the scoring rubrics for demonstrations, and establish protocols for anecdotal record keeping. Above all, accomplished teachers are astute observers of their students—watching their movements and gestures, studying their facial expressions, listening to their

words—so teachers can discover what students are thinking and determine how best to advance their learning.



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accomplished teachers monitor
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Accomplished teachers evaluate their students throughout the learning process, from start to finish. They monitor student behavior at various times, in various situations, and for various purposes. So, when asking questions during group discussions, teachers may determine how well students comprehend information; when speaking

with individuals working independently, they may consider ways to augment student learning; and when using an online assessment that provides immediate feedback from the class, they may gauge the relative value of an instructional technique. Thoughtful assessment requires diligence.

On a continual basis, accomplished teachers monitor the progress of individual students, evaluate classes as learning collectives, and examine their practice in relation to their students and their classes. Those judgments are interconnected, although each merits attention in its own right. The dynamic conveys some of teaching's essential

tensions—educators instruct individual students while guiding the development of groups—and they focus their efforts on students, while striving to improve their practice. Accomplished teachers find ways to accommodate what they know and learn about themselves and their students within plans for the whole group. They take individuals into consideration, thinking across the full spectrum of ability within their classrooms. Individuals may not learn the same things or proceed at the same pace, but accomplished teachers are dedicated to ensuring that they all increase their knowledge, strengthen their skills, and expand their abilities.

Teachers Engage Students in the Learning Process

Throughout the learning process, accomplished teachers work collaboratively with their students. They plan their instruction carefully—identifying educational objectives, developing them, and discussing them with students. Teachers provide children and young adults with a clear understanding of what the objectives are and why they are relevant, encouraging students to take ownership of them. They motivate students to learn by stimulating their interest and challenging them during instruction.

To engage students further, teachers manage classroom dynamics and monitor student progress toward the completion of their goals. Educators analyze learning outcomes in relation to educational objectives, showing students what they have achieved, reviewing what they need to do, and formulating strategies with them for the completion of that work. By contextualizing evaluation within the learning process, accomplished teachers use assessment to empower themselves and their students. They help students identify opportunities to reach their goals and show them the importance of becoming active learners.

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4. TEACHERS THINK SYSTEMATICALLY ABOUT THEIR PRACTICE AND LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE.

5. TEACHERS ARE MEMBERS OF LEARNING COMMUNITIES.

PROPOSITION #4

As with most professions, teaching requires practitioners to remain open, eager for, and dedicated to the pursuit of continuous growth. Because they work in a field marked by evolving questions and an expanding body of research, teachers possess a professional obligation to become perpetual students of their craft. Accomplished educators seek to expand their repertoires, deepen their knowledge and skills, and become wiser in rendering judgments. They remain inventive in their teaching, recognizing the need to welcome new findings and extend their learning as professionals. Accomplished teachers are ready to incorporate ideas and methods developed by other educators to support their instructional goals—namely, the advancement of student learning and the improvement of their practice. What exemplifies excellence,

then, is a reverence for the craft, a recognition of its complexities, and a commitment to lifelong learning and reflection.

Teachers Make Difficult Choices That Test Their Professional Judgment

Often, the demands of teaching present formidable challenges that defy simple solutions. To meet conflicting objectives, accomplished teachers regularly fashion compromises that will satisfy diverse parties. For example, a world history teacher attempting to reconcile the need for broad coverage and in-depth knowledge will do what is necessary to proceed from ancient civilizations to modern nations, while developing student understanding of history as a gradual evolution rather than a discrete series of

chronological events. Likewise, a middle childhood generalist will find a way to teach students the fundamental principles of spelling and grammar, while introducing them to an appreciation of writing as a mode of communication and a thinking process. Accomplished teachers may approach circumstances such as those in different ways, but they all demonstrate the strength and flexibility to negotiate competing goals.

Teachers also may face situations that cause them to reprioritize their goals based on reflection, resulting in the modification of their instructional plans. For example, a teacher may delay part of a daily lesson to foster classroom relationships. Another instructor may address student misunderstandings by reteaching a critical concept instead of moving forward. Circumstances such as those call on teachers to employ their professional knowledge of what constitutes sound practice, giving students' interest the paramount consideration. Accomplished teachers may forge a variety of successful plans to balance rival objectives, but their decisions invariably will be grounded in established theories and reasoned judgment born of experience.

Teachers Use Feedback and Research to Improve Their Practice and Positively Impact Student Learning

Accomplished teachers seek opportunities to cultivate their learning. As savvy students of their own teaching, they know the value of asking colleagues, administrators, and other educators to observe them and offer critiques of their instructional practices. They write about their work as well, and they solicit reactions to their teaching from students and families. Accomplished teachers develop strate-

gies for gaining feedback and insights from a range of stakeholders so they can reflect meaningfully on their pedagogical choices and improve their practice.

Accomplished teachers also stay abreast of current research and, when appro-

appropriate, incorporate new findings into their practice. They take advantage of professional development opportunities such as conferences, workshops, and digital learning experiences. Because testing new approaches and hypotheses is a commonplace habit among such teachers, they might conduct, publish, and present their own research, if so inclined. Accomplished educators understand the



An enthusiasm for, and dedication to, continued professional development distinguishes accomplished teachers and exemplifies the critical disposition they nurture in their students.

legitimacy and the limitations of the diverse sources they employ to inform their teaching, and they use those sources judiciously to enrich their practice.

An enthusiasm for, and dedication to, continued professional development distinguishes accomplished teachers and exemplifies the critical disposition they nurture in their students. The thinking, reasoning, and learning that characterize first-rate teaching are thus valuable twice over: not only are thoughtful teachers able to instruct their students more efficiently and effectively, they also serve as powerful models for the analytical mindset they strive to develop in children and young adults. Teachers who are exemplars of careful, logical deliberation—considering purposes, marshaling evidence, and balancing outcomes—are more likely to communicate the importance of critical thinking to their students and demonstrate how it is accomplished. Those teachers model other crucial traits, as well, such as a commitment to creativity in their work or the willingness to take risks when exploring new intellectual, emotional, physical, and artistic realms.

Accomplished teachers therefore serve as paradigms of lifelong learning and achievement. Character and competence contribute equally to their educative manner. Such teachers embody the virtues they impart to their students: curiosity and a

love of learning, tolerance and open-mindedness, fairness and justice, an appreciation for our cultural and intellectual heritages, and respect for human diversity and dignity. Moreover, they epitomize the intellectual capacities they foster: the ability to reason carefully, consider multiple perspectives, question received wisdom, adopt an inquiry-based approach, solve problems, and persevere. In all aspects of their action and demeanor, accomplished teachers convey the significance of reflection and learning, of pursuit and achievement.

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5. TEACHERS ARE MEMBERS OF LEARNING COMMUNITIES.

PROPOSITION #5

Accomplished teachers reach beyond the boundaries of their individual classrooms to engage wider communities of learning. They connect with local, state, national, and global groups in person or via technology to take advantage of a broad range of professional knowledge and expertise. Accomplished educators draw on those resources when instructing their students and participating in duties that contribute significantly to the quality of schools and student learning. Those duties address two areas of responsibility: collaboration with other professionals to improve the effectiveness of schools, and partnership with families and other stakeholders to promote the education of children and young adults.

Teachers Collaborate with Other Professionals to Improve School Effectiveness

The National Board advocates proactive and creative roles for teachers. Those functions involve analyzing and constructing curricula, coordinating instruction, contributing to the professional development of staff, and participating in other policy decisions fundamental to the development of highly productive learning communities.

Although state authorities and local leadership establish broad goals, objectives, and priorities for districts and schools, accomplished teachers share responsibility with their colleagues and administrators in determining what constitutes valuable learning for students. Educators understand their

legal obligation to carry out public policy as represented in state statutes and regulations, school board directives, court decisions, and other procedural documents—and they bear those mandates in mind while acting as professionals. Accomplished teachers thereby take the initiative to analyze curricula critically, identify new priorities, and communicate necessary changes to the school community. To perform that work effectively, teachers must have a thorough knowledge of their students and curricula as well as a willingness to question conventions and work collaboratively with educational stakeholders.

Developing curricula and coordinating instruction are key functions shared by teachers and administrators. Accomplished teachers work with other educators to plan instructional programs that promote continuity and support equitable learning experiences for all students. They help integrate plans for students with general and exceptional needs by thinking strategically across grade levels, academic tracks, and subject areas. Teachers work closely with administrators and staff to navigate systems, structures, and schedules so they can implement improvements that modify organizational

and curricular aspects of instruction cohesively. Accomplished teachers understand the technical requirements of a well-coordinated curriculum, possess the interpersonal skills needed to work in groups, and exhibit a readiness to join their efforts in the interest of school communities. Those qualities enable educators to participate effectively in plan-

ning and decision making in teams, departments, and other educational units outside the classroom, laboratory, or studio.

Accomplished teachers also are involved in the arrangement of student

services, uniting educators with a wide variety of specializations to ensure that instructional experiences remain productive and coherent. They help teachers partner to support inclusive education and create appropriate learning environments for students with a range of exceptional needs—those who face physical disabilities, sensory impairment, or behavioral challenges, as well as those who are gifted and talented. Accomplished educators foster cooperation among teachers and counselors of English learners, and others who offer high-quality programs featuring English as a new language, bilingual education, and English immersion. Importantly, they uphold the requirements of compensatory



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education with a similar sense of vigilance and dedication. Accomplished teachers are adept at working in tandem with other educators to provide students with the attention they need.

In addition to developing curricula and coordinating instruction schoolwide, accomplished educators work with one another to strengthen their teaching practices. They observe colleagues in the classroom, engage in pedagogical discussions, and collaborate to improve their teaching methods and explore new instructional strategies. Accomplished instructors may focus on different aspects of their practice, based on opportunity, need, and disposition; however, they share a common commitment to pursuing teaching excellence in concert with their peers.

Schools that thrive and flourish emphasize a similar process of continuous improvement. Accomplished teachers in those schools help their colleagues identify and resolve problems while encouraging them to experiment with different teaching methods and forms of instructional organization. They

work as teacher leaders, strengthening professional development and advocating improvements. Educators in less successful schools strive to promote the same traits of excellence—to build systems, develop networks, and foster a culture of innovation that will help their schools prosper.

Accomplished teachers undertake a variety of projects to pursue all those goals, participating actively in their learning communities to promote progress and achievement.

For example, they may mentor novices, form study groups, demonstrate new methodologies, serve on school and district policy councils, or engage in scholarly inquiry and artistic expression. Teachers work with their colleagues as members of a team, sharing their knowledge and skills while contributing to the ongoing development of strong schools. Alongside their administrators and other school leaders, they assume responsibility for the quality of their schools' instructional programs. This set of expectations is integral to the mission of accomplished teachers. It characterizes a professional approach to teaching and distinguishes the educational field as a whole.



Accomplished teachers communicate regularly with students' parents and guardians. Teachers inform them about their children's accomplishments and challenges, responding to their questions, listening to their concerns, and respecting their views.

Teachers Work Collaboratively with Families

Accomplished teachers communicate regularly with students' parents and guardians. Teachers inform them about their children's accomplishments and challenges, responding to their questions, listening to their concerns, and respecting their views. Teachers encourage families to become active participants in their children's education by acquainting them with school programs and enlisting their help to develop skill sets and foster lifelong learning. For instance, a kindergarten teacher may discuss the importance of reading stories at home and show a grandparent why engaging her child in conversation is critical to literacy development. Accomplished teachers share the education of children with families.

Ideally, teachers and parents become mutually reinforcing partners in the education of young people. However, various circumstances can complicate relationships, such as divergent interests or mistrust. Accomplished teachers are alert to those issues and tailor their practice to enhance student

achievement. Understanding that some families may take more time than others to gain confidence in school-home relationships, teachers proceed patiently, learning about cultures, beliefs, and priorities while expressing respect for families and demonstrating their attention to students. Throughout the process, educators develop skills and understandings that help them avoid pitfalls while working to foster positive, collaborative relationships between schools and families.

The changing structure of families in our society creates both challenges and oppor-

tunities. Accomplished teachers must possess a thorough knowledge of their students as individuals to work creatively and effectively with family members. Advancing the intellectual development of students is a teacher's foremost responsibility, but accomplished teachers understand that a broad range of student needs can influence that goal, such as the need for informed caregivers to provide guidance and support. By learning the dynamics within their students' homes, teachers appreciate how they can work with families to address student needs and advance educational gains. The distinctive mission of teaching is the promotion of



Any community—urban, suburban, or rural; wealthy or poor—can become a laboratory for learning under the guidance of an accomplished teacher. Accomplished teachers need not teach alone.

learning—a complex undertaking in and of itself; but accomplished teachers understand that the physical, emotional, and social well-being of students cannot be separated from their intellectual growth.

Teachers Work Collaboratively with the Community

Accomplished teachers cultivate their students' knowledge of the local community as a powerful resource for learning. Opportunities abound for enriching lessons, projects, and topics of study; for example, observing the city council in action, collecting oral histories from senior citizens, studying ecology at a public park, visiting a museum, drawing the local architecture, or exploring career options in small businesses. Any community—urban, suburban, or rural; wealthy or poor—can become a laboratory for learning under the guidance of an accomplished teacher. The Internet can extend those experiences, giving students the chance to investigate local towns further or to explore cities, states, and countries farther afield. Within all those communities, instructional partners such as government officials, organizational volunteers, and corporate leaders can serve as valuable assets, supplementing and enhancing the education of students. Accomplished teachers need not teach alone.

Teachers also explore the concept of culture within their communities and its influence on children and young adults. Accomplished educators encourage students to appreciate linguistic traditions and ethnic contributions, to study social influences on their expectations and aspirations, and to discuss the effects that economic conditions can have on political views and outlooks. Although careful attention to diversity may challenge teachers, learning about a wealth of cultures can help them work meaningfully with students. An understanding of multiculturalism promotes an acknowledgment of differences and similarities, which, in turn, inspires students to accept individuals and to adopt civic ideals. Accomplished teachers capitalize on those opportunities so they can respond productively to their students' diverse backgrounds.

Such work rests on a delicate balance. Teachers cannot alleviate all the social problems they encounter, but they can be sensitive to those issues and caring toward students as they fulfill their professional responsibilities as educators. Teachers confront the human condition daily in all its splendor and misery; what they choose to share, how they respond, and how they prepare students in the face of it all are the factors that distinguish teachers who are truly accomplished.

CONCLUSION

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PROFESSION

CONCLUSION

The National Board's standards and assessment were created by educators and [have been] tested and revised, and the [Board certification] process is performance-based and peer-reviewed. ... If educators mapped backward from board certification, embedding the standards and the process, even as they are now, into the steps every teacher takes from preservice on, teaching in general would be stronger, and the profession would have a sturdy base on which its future could be built.

What matters is the continuum and the agreement within the profession that there can be only one. That has been the key to the success of every other profession. It is the underpinning of a profession's authority, and there is no reason to think teaching will ever achieve the same status without it.³

Ronald Thorpe

President and CEO,
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2011–2015

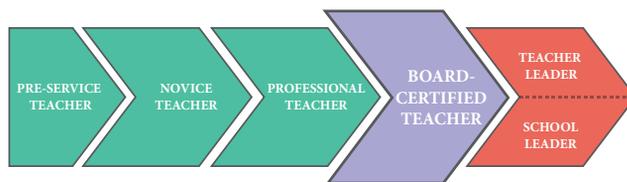
³ Thorpe, R. (2014). Sustaining the teaching profession. *New England Journal of Public Policy*, 26(1), 1–16.

To ensure all students receive an education that prepares them for postsecondary success and life, the teaching profession must be strengthened such that it systematically guarantees high-quality teaching practices. In other professions, such as medicine, engineering, and architecture, board certification has helped to create a culture and expectation of accomplished practice, both within the profession and amongst the public. Professions build this expectation into their preparation and practice development pipelines by design, beginning with a clear vision of what its accomplished practitioners should know and be able to do and then mapping backwards to ensure each new practitioner begins their career knowing what achieving board certification would mean for the level of their practice. Those professions have done what teaching must

now do: define and strengthen a coherent continuum to ensure that every teacher in America is on a path to accomplished teaching.

With this continuum in place, Board certification would be the norm, not the exception, and be fully integrated into the fabric of the teaching profession. The Five Core Propositions, as explicated above, would serve as the guiding framework for every teacher's ongoing development of their practice. This continuum, explicitly and visibly aligned to the Five Core Propositions and National Board Standards, begins in preservice preparation, proceeds developmentally to and through Board certification and into educational leadership, each step engineered to support teachers working toward more accomplished practice.

Professional Career Continuum for Teaching



Pre-service Teacher

A strong pre-service experience builds the content knowledge and teaching skill of entering teachers to a level of beginning proficiency with an eye towards

the eventual development of accomplished practice. Preparation of new teachers should require a residency year with a reduced teaching load and intense supervision, enabling the practice-based

development of teaching skill. High-quality initial licensure requirements, including teacher performance assessments, would allow aspiring teachers to demonstrate they possess the knowledge and skills required to be effective in a classroom. Throughout the preparation experience, Board certification can serve as a qualification or preference for clinical faculty at teacher preparation programs and cooperating teachers who work with student teachers during their clinical experiences and residency, as it signals a teacher who understands and has incorporated the Five Core Propositions into their practice. If teacher candidates, as they complete their preparation program, study the Five Core Propositions, encounter National Board Standards, and analyze the practices of the Board-certified teachers in schools or through case analysis in ATLAS⁴, they will begin their careers on a path to develop into accomplished practitioners themselves.

Novice Teacher

The early years of a teacher's career should build from their preparation experience, with a robust mentoring and induction program for novice teachers seeking to further new teachers' efforts to improve their practice, understand the priorities of

their school and school system, and build relationships with their colleagues. Through infusing the content of the Five Core Propositions, the National Board Standards, and case analysis of accomplished teaching into induction programs, and by ensuring novice teachers receive mentorship from Board-certified practitioners, teachers' early-career development will be strengthened. This coherence will improve retention of novice teachers, instill in them the practice of continuous reflection, shape the culture and language of professional practice in their schools, and lead them towards accomplished practice and Board certification.

Professional Teacher

Professional teachers, having demonstrated the knowledge and skills needed to positively impact student learning, benefit from ongoing professional learning and growth. Various systems shape and support them in this endeavor, including state licensure (or certification) systems, local educator evaluation systems, and professional learning opportunities offered through local education agencies and professional associations. Importantly, educators' needs evolve. Engaging in the same life-long learning they want their students to embrace, teachers are constantly striving to meet students'

⁴ ATLAS, which stands for Accomplished Teaching, Learning, and Schools, is an online library of cases showing Board-certified teachers at work with students. Each case contains video of instruction, the teacher's analytic and reflective analysis of the instruction, and instructional materials used with the students.

ever-changing needs and to stay current in their field. These experienced teachers can engage more deeply with the Five Core Propositions and National Board Standards to guide their growth as they delve into problems of practice and seek both individual and communal professional learning opportunities. Coaching and support from Board-certified teachers can further help them expand their knowledge and skills. When ready, professional teachers can begin their candidacy for Board certification.

Board-certified Teacher

At the heart of the continuum is National Board Certification, a process designed for teachers to demonstrate, through standards-based evidence, the positive impact they have on student learning as a result of their deep and abiding understanding of students, content knowledge, pedagogical practice, ongoing reflection, and participation in learning communities. Under the guidance and mentorship of Board-certified colleagues and with the support of fellow candidates, candidates for Board certification submit evidence that their practice meets the Five Core Propositions and National Board Standards, a body of knowledge that is maintained by teachers. Practicing teachers, through a peer-review process, then assess their submissions. Board certification, as in all other professions, is a hard-earned distinction practitioners bestow on each other.

Today when Board-certified teachers attest to the positive impact the certification process had on their practice, they often remark that the pursuit of Board certification was the most transformative professional learning experience they have ever had. In a profession where Board certification is the norm, however, it would be the natural next step in a career that has been coherently building towards the development and demonstration of accomplished practice since day one. Increasingly, school-based learning communities will support teachers to work together towards accomplished practice and becoming Board-certified. Ultimately, this phase of a teacher's career is marked by fulfilling a professional responsibility to their students, to themselves, to their colleagues, and to the profession.

Educational Leader

Board certification is a foundation through which teacher leadership, in all its many forms, can take hold. At its core, National Board Certification is about demonstrating a teacher's impact on student learning around a specialized body of content. Once achieved, Board certification serves as a platform for teachers to grow professionally and to become leaders in their schools, districts, states, and the profession. At the school level, teachers can model what the Five Core Propositions look

like in action, spreading their knowledge and skills to help develop the next generation of accomplished practitioners. At the district and state level, Board-certified teachers can transform isolated pockets of excellence into system-wide improvement. Board-certified teachers can work to support fellow educators along the continuum, for example by teaching or mentoring in preparation programs, leading induction programs, engaging colleagues in inquiry and study of National Board Standards, or by taking on formalized roles in schools, local or state agencies, or professional associations. They can contribute to the body of knowledge that underlies teaching through research, standards development, and other endeavors that impact the professional practice of all teachers. In the future, Board-certified teachers will fill other roles yet to be created, roles that will emerge as the body of

knowledge of accomplished practice upon which the continuum is based becomes more and more visible and Board certification becomes a collectively held expectation.

The work to codify the Five Core Propositions and the National Board Standards and to develop the Board certification process was led by teachers, for teachers. The work to build a continuum in the teaching profession grounded in this body of knowledge will be no different. It will not be easy work and the path to success will not be straightforward. Yet, when it is successful, it will have an immeasurable impact on the learning experiences and outcomes for millions of students. All students—each and every student—will learn from accomplished teachers every day.

“Teachers, administrators, and others whose work is designed to support best practice in our schools must seize this moment to rethink every aspect of the trajectory people follow to become accomplished teachers. Getting that path right and making sure all teachers follow it asserts the body of knowledge and skills teachers need and leads to a level of consistent quality that is the hallmark of all true professions.

The government cannot do it. Business cannot do it. Only educators can make it happen, and we need to seize the opportunity we have now to do just that.”⁵

Ronald Thorpe

⁵ Thorpe, R. (2014). Sustaining the teaching profession. *New England Journal of Public Policy*, 26(1), 1–16.

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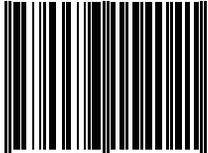
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for Professional Teaching Standards

Action-Based Conversations: Facilitator’s Guide to Exploring Accomplished Practice in Leadership

Core Prop 5: Accomplished Educational leaders drive, facilitate, and monitor the teaching and learning process. (*Standard 3: Teaching and Learning*)

Title: Instructional Leadership

Brief Description: Accomplished educational leaders advocate for instructional programs that promote and support equitable learning experiences for all students from different cultures. They understand and create systems that provide opportunities to advocate for students and families of diverse backgrounds.

“Accomplished principals consciously create a culture of collective effort, high expectations, high performance, and supportive structures. Accomplished principals transform schools into learning communities.”

“Accomplished principals lead their schools to adopt or develop a clear framework for instructional practice....Further, accomplished principals articulate a theory of action that is clear to teachers, staff, and parents to explain why specific strategies are brought to bear on the particular problems and context of their school.”

Protocols Included: [Go Around Method](#), [Attributes of a Learning Community](#), [Action Plan](#)
Outcome-based objectives:

<i>Objectives</i>
Explore the 5 Core Propositions
Create an action plan for developing school wide professional development.

Length/Timing: 120 Minutes

Materials or Special Set-up Required:

<p><i>Before Conversation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarize yourself with the The 5 Core Propositions
<p>Discuss the 5 Core Propositions and how they pertain to the schools vision. Brainstorm with participants and use chart paper to create a web of classroom activities that illustrates the 5 core propositions.</p>

Process:	Notes
Using index cards or post-its, participants will select and highlight a quote from the text, What Teacher Should Know and Be Able to Do , that is either interesting, thought provoking, or contrary to current thinking.	~10 min



Accomplished Leadership Series

<p>Using the Go Round Method, each participant shares the quotation they chose and an explanation why it was selected. Other team members respond and have a group discussion about it.</p> <p>Continue with the process until every team member has an opportunity to share their selected quote with a group discussion on it.</p> <p>Facilitator invites participants to post quotes on big chart paper once they are finished sharing and discussing with group members.</p>	~20 min
<p>Participants write about a personal experience that they know was a place of positive learning for them (Club, School, Course etc.)</p> <p>In groups of 3 or 4 participants share their story. As each person speaks, the group picks out the attributes that made that learning community productive. List out 4 or 5 attributes that stand out.</p> <p>Complete the NYU needs assessment on the building.</p> <p>Facilitator encourages group to use attributes to develop an action plan for professional development in their building or district. Make copies of the NYU building needs assessment. Use findings to develop a Professional Development Series based on the 5 core propositions.</p>	~15 min ~20-30 min
<p>Facilitator reminds group to focus on curriculum, instruction and assessment that helps create a community of care.</p> <p>By yourself or with a partner develop an action plan for creating a professional development series.</p> <p>Quiet Read: Teaching and Learning Principal Standard (5 min) How does this plan support the Teaching and Learning Principal Standards?</p>	~20 Min ~15 min
<p>Exit Ticket: One minute standing conversation. Create a sales pitch for your Professional Development Series and sell it to the group of leaders.</p>	~10 Min

Source(s):

[What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do: The Five Core Propositions](#)

Activity documented by: Philip Weinman, NBCT



Accomplished Leadership Series

Elevating the Profession through Leadership: A New Professional Learning Series

LOCATION: DATE

NATIONAL BOARD
OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS

National Board Core Propositions
for Accomplished Educational Leaders™

NT3

1



Agenda:

- The 5 Core: What Teachers Should Know
 - Select a quote
- Discussion and Post Quotes
- Identifying Attributes
- Needs Assessment
- Action Planning for Professional Learning
- Crosswalk with the Teaching and Learning Leadership Standards

Accomplished Leadership Series

2



Purpose: This series is designed for building leaders. This professional learning opportunity will provide rich, deep, collaborative action-based conversations to allow the personal and professional exploration of accomplished practice in leadership.

Essential Questions:

- What does accomplished leadership look like and sound like, in your building, with your population?
- What is the vision? How is it communicated?
- How is student and adult learning managed and monitored?
- How are collaborative partnerships built with families, stakeholders, and communities?

Accomplished Leadership Series

3



4



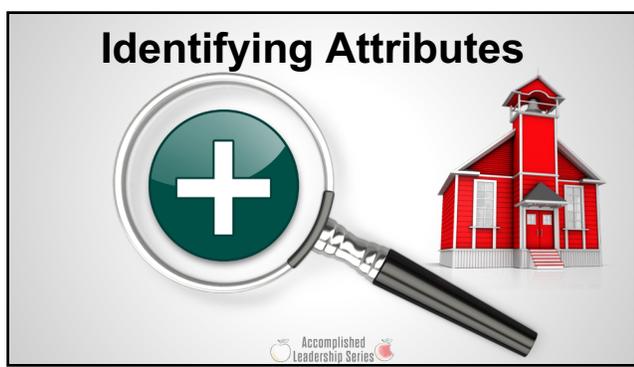
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11



12

FUTURE DATES:



13

Facilitators:

Name

Email



Resources:

www.accomplishedteachingny.org

nbpts.org



14



15

Standard III Teaching and Learning

Accomplished principals ensure that teaching and learning are the primary focus of the organization. As stewards of learning, these principals lead the implementation of a rigorous, relevant, and balanced curriculum. They work collaboratively to implement a common instructional framework that aligns curriculum with teaching, assessment, and learning, and provides a common language for instructional quality that guides teacher conversation, practice, observation, evaluation, and feedback. They know a full range of pedagogy and make certain that all adults have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to support student success.

Teaching and learning are central to the work of accomplished principals. Every thought, every word, and every action focuses and engages all stakeholders to further learning and to establish a learning environment that develops the whole student. These principals instill a purposeful sense of urgency throughout the learning community, resulting in high performance on the part of each student and adult.

Accomplished principals consciously advance teaching and learning as the core business of the organization. They oversee the planning and development of the curriculum, lead its implementation, develop systems to evaluate its effectiveness, and make adjustments as necessary. These principals develop a comprehensive learning experience with rigorous and relevant academic programming that aligns the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment practices, providing a variety of opportunities for all students to reach learning goals. They collaboratively set high expectations for all students, staff, and community members and create opportunities for every student and adult to meet those goals. To maintain high standards, accomplished principals continually ask the questions, “Who is learning and why?” and “Who is not learning, why not, and what are we going to do about it?”

Accomplished principals focus on teaching and learning by

- planning for learning
- collaboratively implementing curricula
- continuously monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting performance



Planning for Learning

Accomplished principals ensure that the instructional program is relevant and forward-thinking. They act on the imperative that students must be prepared for a future of undetermined challenges and needs; thus these principals ensure that the curriculum is rich with experiences that will develop students' capacity for living in, working in, and contributing to a global society. They guarantee that classroom experiences include many opportunities for problem solving, critical thinking, and social learning and meet diverse, targeted learning needs.

Accomplished principals collaborate with others to ensure that materials, support, and training are relevant and appropriate, incorporate high expectations, and reflect a balanced curriculum. These principals know how to access and use the professional expertise in the networks within and outside the learning community. They may work through partnerships with civic and community groups to ensure that teachers, staff, and students have access to and support for the use of appropriate technology, instructional materials, and resources.

Accomplished principals effectively communicate the focus on learning and engage support for the learning process. Accomplished principals actively engage all stakeholders in formal and informal dialogue, building a sense of urgency and ownership in the pursuit of established learning goals. Their communication is interactive: they seek and welcome feedback and input from diverse sources, with the aim of continuously improving learning.

Accomplished principals work with staff members to ensure they are proficient in culturally relevant practices and in the consistent infusion of technology. Because these principals understand that curricula are not classroom dependent, they help staff members reach beyond the classroom to provide diverse opportunities. These principals involve and engage the community and its resources in the work of the learning organization. For example, these principals might arrange externships, link to university and skill center programs, or develop online learning facilities. They may use online learning tools to provide access to courses that enrich the curriculum, to enhance academic rigor and relevance.

Collaboratively Implementing Curricula

Accomplished principals lead the implementation of a balanced, rigorous, relevant, diverse, and standards-based curriculum. These principals apply their thorough understanding of the complexity of pedagogy to support teachers in making informed choices about matching instructional strategies to the curriculum.

Accomplished principals identify and creatively minimize or eliminate barriers and obstacles to learning. They structure time and resources to support teachers to work collaboratively in examining student work, in holding professional conversations, and

in adjusting their teaching practices accordingly. These principals empower others to solve challenges to learning. They know what questions to ask, how to help people answer their own questions, and how to problem solve, whatever the situation might be. Accomplished principals understand adult learning theory and employ a variety of strategies that are appropriate to the intended outcomes. Understanding that staff members are on a continuum of development, accomplished principals provide thoughtful support for all staff members at every stage of practice. They do this by building relationships, developing common understandings of effective teaching practices, and communicating clear expectations of performance.

Accomplished principals are consistently present where teaching and learning occur. They model, coach, and mentor in order to support others to grow in their practice. For example, these principals use regular, structured classroom visits with timely, meaningful feedback on performance as one method of participating in observations of teaching and learning.

These principals provide teachers with professional learning that is aligned with the vision, goals, and objectives of the organization. They continually evaluate the learning opportunities provided to staff members and listen to staff members to ensure that professional learning meets individual needs and improves student learning. They design structures so teachers can systematically and regularly observe each others' work and share effective practices. These principals learn from teachers' experiences and use the findings to shape and influence professional development.

Accomplished principals identify individual teachers' needs and provide appropriate strategic support. Peer support might include a well-crafted program for teacher induction and mentoring, professional learning opportunities matched to the various stages of teachers' professional careers, and new roles and leadership opportunities for experienced staff members.

Continuously Monitoring, Evaluating, and Adjusting Performance

Accomplished principals identify and use a variety of methods and measures to analyze performance. They articulate a clear theory of action to explain why strategies are expected to lead to desired results and to identify sources of evidence that are acceptable markers of success. Accomplished principals know what information to seek, how to gather it, and how to analyze it to make informed decisions that support high levels of performance. They are skilled in disaggregating and interpreting data for the purpose of analyzing areas of strength and growth and determining paths to improvement in learning. These principals are adept at assisting teachers with analyzing data and identifying opportunities for improvement and for sustaining successes. For example, accomplished principals who perceive a gap in the instructional program might design a structure to allow teachers to align content with state standards. Such principals would



encourage teachers to take the process to the next level by creating an action plan for teaching week by week throughout the school year and then providing feedback to the principal. Accomplished principals empower teachers to change their classroom practices to adapt content in ways that enhance student learning.

Accomplished principals collaborate with others to collect and analyze information from multiple sources—qualitative and quantitative, formative and summative. For example, they work with leadership teams or horizontal and vertical teams to keep data as a focus on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. They use these data to monitor and evaluate student performance and to inform teacher practice at the classroom level. In addition, accomplished principals look at teacher practices through the same multiple formats with which they encourage teachers to look at students. These formats include formal and informal classroom observations, student work evaluations with teachers, and comprehensive evaluation conferences.

Accomplished principals ensure the attainment of student and adult learning goals. If goals are not met, these principals do what is necessary to identify the causes and work collaboratively to seek and implement remedies. They ensure that appropriate interventions are consistently provided for students and adults who are not meeting targeted goals, without compromising the opportunity for all to engage in the full program of the learning community.

Accomplished principals demonstrate transparency by continually communicating the results of individual students' and school-wide performance. They make sure that the academic progress of the learning community is visible and accessible. Progress may be displayed internally, for example, in charts and graphs for staff use. External displays of progress may include examples of students' achievements in academics, the arts, and athletics. These principals lead the celebration of the attainment of learning goals.

Reflections on Standard III

STANDARD 4. CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT

Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

Effective leaders:

- a) Implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that promote the mission, vision, and core values of the school, embody high expectations for student learning, align with academic standards, and are culturally responsive.
- b) Align and focus systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment within and across grade levels to promote student academic success, love of learning, the identities and habits of learners, and healthy sense of self.
- c) Promote instructional practice that is consistent with knowledge of child learning and development, effective pedagogy, and the needs of each student.
- d) Ensure instructional practice that is intellectually challenging, authentic to student experiences, recognizes student strengths, and is differentiated and personalized.
- e) Promote the effective use of technology in the service of teaching and learning.
- f) Employ valid assessments that are consistent with knowledge of child learning and development and technical standards of measurement.
- g) Use assessment data appropriately and within technical limitations to monitor student progress and improve instruction.

STANDARD 7. PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY FOR TEACHERS AND STAFF

Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote *each* student’s academic success and well-being.

Effective leaders:

- a) Develop workplace conditions for teachers and other professional staff that promote effective professional development, practice, and student learning.
- b) Empower and entrust teachers and staff with collective responsibility for meeting the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student, pursuant to the mission, vision, and core values of the school.
- c) Establish and sustain a professional culture of engagement and commitment to shared vision, goals, and objectives pertaining to the education of the whole child; high expectations for professional work; ethical and equitable practice; trust and open communication; collaboration, collective efficacy, and continuous individual and organizational learning and improvement.
- d) Promote mutual accountability among teachers and other professional staff for each student’s success and the effectiveness of the school as a whole.
- e) Develop and support open, productive, caring, and trusting working relationships among leaders, faculty, and staff to promote professional capacity and the improvement of practice.
- f) Design and implement job-embedded and other opportunities for professional learning collaboratively with faculty and staff.
- g) Provide opportunities for collaborative examination of practice, collegial feedback, and collective learning.
- h) Encourage faculty-initiated improvement of programs and practices.



Guidelines for Evaluating Culturally Relevant Teaching Materials¹ -- Worksheet

Purpose: *To determine the level of cultural responsiveness in existing curricular materials and identify areas of improvement.*

Student Enrollment Percentages		
Black:	English Language Learners:	List all ethnic groups represented in your school:
White:	Students with Disabilities:	
Latino:		
Asian:		
American Indian:		
Bi-racial/Other:		
<p>Question 1: To what extent do the materials include the various groups in American society? Identify the number of times the following groups represented in teaching material used on each grade level:</p>		

¹ Based on: Salend, S. J. (2005). *Creating inclusive classrooms: Effective and reflective practices* (5th ed.). Columbus, OH: Merrill/Prentice Hall.



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<p>Race:</p> <p>(Example: American Indian are represented in 5 out of 20 books in the 1st grade)</p>	<p>Ethnicity:</p>	<p>Gender:</p>	<p>Sexuality:</p>	<p>Religion:</p>
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Question 2: How are various groups portrayed in materials? Identify the number of times the groups in **Question 1** are portrayed in teaching material used on each grade level in the following ways:

<p>Protagonist:</p>	<p>Antagonist:</p>	<p>Powerful:</p> <p>(Example: 1 out of 5 books in the 1st grade represent Native Americans as powerful)</p>	<p>Powerless:</p>	<p>Dominant:</p>	<p>Minority:</p>	<p>High social capital:</p>	<p>Low social capital:</p>
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Question 3: Do the materials present a varied group of credible individuals to whom students can relate? Identify the quantity of material available that students can relate to, based on the following:



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Lifestyle:	Values:	Speech:	Language: (Example: 10 out of 20 books in the 1 st grade include the Spanish language for our 50 Dominican students)	Cultural experiences:	Actions:
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Question 4: Are individuals from diverse backgrounds depicted in a wide range of social and professional activities? Identify the specific representations used to depict the groups in **Question 1** using the following general categories:

Occupations:	Hobbies:	Extracurricular: (Example: 1 out of 20 books in the 1 st grade depict Asian students as sailors)	Roles played most or less often:
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Question 5: Are a wide range of perspectives on situations and issues offered? Identify the types of perspective offered in teaching materials:



Proponent:

(**Example:** 15 out of 20 books in the 1st grade represented the perspectives of both the American Indian and Pilgrims)

Opposition:

Question 6: Do the teaching materials avoid stereotypes and generalizations about groups...



<p>Racially?:</p> <p>(Example: 19 out of 20 books in the 1st grade represent Latinos as Doctors</p>	<p>Ethnically?:</p>	<p>By gender?:</p>	<p>By sexuality?:</p>	<p>By religion?:</p>
Question 7: Are the teaching materials factually accurate...				
<p>Historically?:</p> <p>(Example: 3 out of 20 books in the 1st grade represent misrepresent Palestinians)</p>	<p>Socially?:</p>	<p>Economically?:</p>	<p>Politically?:</p>	<p>Culturally?:</p>



<p>Question 8: Do teaching materials incorporate the history, heritage, experiences, language, and traditions of various groups in Question 1?</p>	<p>Question 9: Are the experiences of and issues important to various groups presented in a realistic manner that allows students to recognize and understand their complexities?</p>	<p>Question 10: Are graphics used in teaching materials accurate, inclusive, and ethnically?</p>	<p>Question 11: Is the language or references used in the teaching materials inclusive?</p>	<p>Question 12: Do the teaching materials include learning activities that help students develop a diversity of perspectives?</p>
<p>(Example: 20 out of 20 books in the 1st grade reflect the history of Black Americans)</p>	<p>(Example: 10 out of 50 books in the 5th grade describe slavery as a legitimate business)</p>	<p>(Example: 25 out of 50 books in the 5th grade had homogenous groups overrepresented)</p>	<p>(Example: 25 out of 50 books in the 5th grade had materials included culturally diverse populations)</p>	<p>(Example: 5 out of 50 books in the 5th grade included activities that support diverse perspectives)</p>



Question 13: Who wrote the teaching materials used?

(**Example:** 50 of 100 books in the 12th grade were written by females)?

Question 14: Are there offensive images in your teaching materials?

(**Example:** 5 of 30 books in the 8th grade had offensive images)

Question 15: How often are there messages about sharing, friendship or overcoming obstacles in your teaching materials?



Question 16: How often are there messages about diversity in your teaching materials?

Question 17: How often do female characters appear in your teaching materials?



Question 18: How often do characters with disabilities appear in your teaching materials?

Question 19: How often do people with non-traditional lifestyles outside the cultural norm appear in your teaching materials?

Question 20: Look for words like “savage”, “lazy”, “silly” and “bashful”. Do any of your teaching material contains any dialect, think about whether the use is appropriate and respectful, or could it be considered offensive or perpetuate stereotypes?



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School Building Walkthrough Tool

Purpose: *To learn about the current state of affairs for a specific school, as well as evaluate the current level of cultural responsiveness in a school building during an observation.*

District: _____ **School Name:** _____

Date: _____ **Visit Time:** _____ -- _____

Meeting Attendees: _____

Part I

Conversation with Leadership Team Before Classroom Visits	
Describe your school: What are your overall strengths? What is your school specifically known for within the district?	
Describe student enrollment by race/ethnicity/gender. Describe teaching staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By race/ethnicity/gender • By number of years teaching How diverse is the staff district-wide?	
Describe your test scores (ELA/Math, Regents) Who are your proficient or above-proficient students, based on different identities (racial, ethnic, gender, IEP)? Who are your below-proficient students, based on different identities (racial, ethnic, gender, IEP)?	



<p>What are your school's instructional strengths?</p>	
<p>What are your school's areas of growth regarding instruction?</p>	
<p>What supports are in place for academically struggling students?</p> <p>Who are your students who are most often identified as struggling academically, based on different identities (e.g., racial, ethnic, gender, IEP, etc.)?</p>	
<p>What happens to students who are late?</p> <p>Who are your students who are most often late to school, based on different identities (e.g., racial, ethnic, gender, IEP, etc.)? What disciplinary action is often taken and by whom?</p>	
<p>Describe any spaces in the school designated for discipline.</p> <p>What students are most often sent to these locations, based on different identities (e.g., racial, ethnic, gender, IEP, etc.)?</p>	



<p>What supports are in place for behaviorally struggling students?</p> <p>Who are your students who are most often identified as struggling behaviorally, based on different identities (e.g., racial, ethnic, gender, IEP, etc.)?</p>	
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Part II

Building-Level Observations

School Entrance			
Observation	Observed	Not Observed	Comments
All visitors (including yourself) of various backgrounds (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender) are greeted by staff with a visitor pass and directed to the appropriate location upon entering building.			
The school feels welcoming (<i>i.e., warm and a smile</i>), including acknowledging and greeting visitors, students, teachers, families of different backgrounds (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender) who enter, there is minimal wait time to be directed to appropriate location.			
The main office is an orderly and well-managed environment (<i>e.g., organized, designated area for visitors to sign in</i>).			
The main office had students of different backgrounds (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender) seated during instructional time. Note in the comments if the same students were in the office when you departed, and what the students were doing.			
Total:			

Physical Environment



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Technical Assistance Center on Disproportionality (TAC-D)

Observation	Observed	Not Observed	Comments
The physical environment is welcoming and supportive of learning (e.g., well-lit, painted walls, graffiti free, clean, etc.) and highlights all identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender) in positive ways.			
Self-contained classrooms are supportive of learning and are included within the school community, classrooms are not identified as special education and isolated from other classrooms (e.g., basement, corner of the building). Students of all backgrounds (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender) are represented in self-contained classrooms.			
The physical space is utilized effectively (i.e., not overcrowded or underutilized and routinely checked by for students lingering or loitering) Students found lingering and loitering are of different backgrounds (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender).			
The physical school environment is secure (i.e., outside doors are kept closed or monitored, and outside student activities are monitored and transitions are monitored). Those monitoring these locations are engaged and actively interacting with students of all backgrounds (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender).			
The cafeteria is clean, orderly, well-managed and with appropriate student groupings (e.g., 1 st graders are separated from 8 th graders). Students are provided with mechanisms to meet behavioral expectations (e.g.,			



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Technical Assistance Center on Disproportionality (TAC-D)

<i>rules, behavioral expectations are posted in the cafeteria, adults are walking around in the cafeteria).</i>			
Students in the cafeteria are seated with diverse students of different backgrounds (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender) reflecting the school demographic.			
There is respect for differences (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, culture, etc.) at all levels of the school that demonstrate how the school embraces differences, including information/signs being posted in relevant languages that reflect school community, postings on bulletin boards in classroom, entryways, office, library reflect the diversity of students in the school and community partners, murals or paintings that reflect the diversity of students and their family, etc.			
The hallways include current examples of student or family/community work, accolades, or recognition across identity groups (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender).			
The school mission statement is visible, reflects an equity and culturally responsive message that is apparent in interactions and behaviors with the building.			
Student behavioral expectations are designed to support all students and school rules are visible in the hallways, entryways, classrooms, cafeteria, etc.			
Clear directions (e.g., <i>bathroom signs, arrows directing individuals to</i>			



<i>different locations in the building) are posted throughout the school in an engaging manner (e.g., colorful, neat, clearly written).</i>			
Total:			

Student/Staff Interactions			
Observation	Observed	Not Observed	Comments
Students of all backgrounds (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender) are being respectful (e.g., <i>tone of voice, how students speak to each other, excessive teasing, ridicule, devalue</i>) to one another and to staff members of different backgrounds (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender). Provide examples in comment section.			
Staff members are aware of how students see their interaction with them, and the extent to which students see them as caring.			
Staff members explicitly teach the knowledge and behaviors that play a role in a person’s success within school culture.			
Staff members teach students the skills to counter bias, harassment and stereotyping; encourage students to become good allies.			
Staff members of all backgrounds (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender) are being respectful (e.g., <i>tone of voice is warm, how students are spoken to-not sarcastic, ridicule, devalue</i>) to students of different backgrounds and to one another. Provide			



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examples in comment section.			
There is respect for differences (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, culture, etc.) at all levels of the school (student-student, adult-adult) and an overall culture that embraces differences. Students are provided with mechanisms to meet expectations for embracing differences.			
Total:			
Transitions			
Observation	Observed	Not Observed	Comments
Transition times are of appropriate length and are effectively monitored by school staff of different backgrounds (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender), including hall monitors of different backgrounds (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender). Describe in comment section.			
Movement during transitions is orderly (e.g., <i>all students appear to be heading to class with minimal horseplay</i>) for students of all backgrounds (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender).			
Students of all backgrounds have a hall pass at times other than transition times, and students of different backgrounds are actively checked for hall passes.			
Support staff, teachers, and administrators and families of different backgrounds (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender) are visible and engaging with students of all backgrounds (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender) during transitions and at other times in the day.			
Total:			



Part III

Classroom-Level Observations

Classroom Environment			
Observation	Observed	Not Observed	Comments
Staff members deliver the message that ALL students can learn. Staff helps students to appreciate current and historical events from multiple perspectives.			
Learn about their students, including how differences of race, culture, class, character, gender, and genes influence their experience of schooling and academics.			
Reinforces the integrity of the cultural knowledge that students bring with them to the classroom.			
Develops learning activities that are more reflective of students' backgrounds, including integrated units around universal themes.			
Help students make connections between what they are learning in school and their personal experiences.			
Staff members vary teaching approaches to accommodate diverse learning styles and			



language proficiency.			
Staff members instruct through teacher/student dialogue and small group work that is academic and goal directed.			
Staff members provide students with opportunities to learn through observation and hands-on demonstration of cultural knowledge and skills.			
Total:			

**** Pair this with the Curriculum and Instruction Calculation Tool for a thorough walkthrough observation protocol.**

Overall Walkthrough Summary:

How many classrooms were visited overall? How many classrooms were visited per grade level?	
Overall strengths of school	
Instructional strengths	



Areas of growth in instruction	
--------------------------------	--

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

Name: _____ CRE Team _____

Goal/Vision: _____

Objective _____

Strategies to Achieve Objective	Timelines, Persons Responsible,	Resources Needed	Indicators of Success & Evaluation Plan	Date & Status or Date Completed



Action-Based Conversations:

Facilitator’s Guide to Exploring Accomplished Practice in Leadership

Core Prop 6: Accomplished educational leaders act with a sense of urgency to foster a cohesive culture of learning. *(Standard 5: Culture)*

Title: Developing Equity and Cultural Responsive

Brief Description: Educational leaders will examine their core beliefs, policies and practices amongst critical friends in an effort to deconstruct their schema. Leaders will then consider the challenges and barriers a leader must address around the issues of race, equity and a students opportunity to learn. Leaders will then develop strategies to mitigate the issues of racial disproportionality in our schools.

“Accomplished leaders plan for success and seize opportunities. They leave nothing to chance. They neither shy away from challenges nor see themselves or their organizations as victims without options. They move forward with a sense of urgency, creating a culture of accountability where the norm for all is purposeful impatience.”

~National Board Principal Standards, pg. 14

Protocols Included: Save the Last Word, Gap Analysis Protocol, Community Circle, Whip around

Outcome-based objectives:

<i>Objectives</i>
Participants will examine their core beliefs in an effort to address the challenges and barriers related to addressing the equity gap.
Participants will discuss an educational system that creates a trusting and safe environment helping mitigate the issues of disproportionality.

Length/Timing: 120 minutes

Materials or Special Set-up Required: Overhead projector, permanent markers, and small rocks.

November 2016 Volume 74 Number 3 Disrupting Inequity Pages 16-22 Let’s Talk about Racism in Schools <i>Rick Wormeli</i>

Process:	<i>Notes</i>
Quiet read Standard 5 select a statement that best captures one of your core values/beliefs Save the Last Word protocol	~25 min
Gap Analysis Protocol- Each person in the triad takes a turn facilitating and presenting. Monitor time closely to make sure each person has an equal amount of time to address their core beliefs. (Repeat steps 2-5 for each member)	~40 Min
1. In writing reflect on the core beliefs of your school or on your own leadership motto. Write how this belief is visible and present in your current practice and where the equity gaps are.	~5 min



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2. In groups of 3, the first person shares his or her belief and analysis of that belief in action in the school or community (Soup Box)	~3 min
3. The rest of the group asks clarifying questions about the details once the presentation is done.	~2 min
4. The group does a “gap analysis” of the presenters practice and chosen beliefs about race. (Presenter should take notes)	~5 min
5. Presenter then reflects to the group and shares at least one idea that will become part of their work to mitigate the issue of race.	~2 min
Watch a student circle covering the topic of race and the opportunity to learn (OTL) <i>Have participants take notes on what the students state about the schools beliefs, policies and practices. How do they align with your core beliefs?</i>	~20 Min
Information will be used in the next activity.	
The circle keeper should review the sequence of events in a circle in the “Teaching Restorative Practices With Classroom Circles” text. This is located on page 19-20. For Review: Principals for Candid Conversations about Race	~40 Min
Introduce community circle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Form a circle as a group ● Introduce the talking piece State your name and write a value on a paper plate. Place the paper plate in the middle of the circle. Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why is it so difficult to talk about race? ● Do all of our students have an equal opportunity to learn (OTL)? Explain your response. ● What is one major barrier or challenge we still face? ● How do we make it right for all our students moving forward? 	
Hand out small rocks and permanent markers to record responses on. <i>Example: “race will not predict students trajectory”</i>	
Exit Ticket- 6 word memoir rock Identify a belief statement that reflects what you believe about equity in our future schools. <i>This should be a statement that leaders will live by or represent in their current practice.</i>	

Connections and Extensions: [Courageous Conversations About Race](#) (Corwin, 2006)

Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates (Spiegel & Grau, 2015)

Raising Race Questions: Whiteness and Inquiry in Education by Ali Michael (Teachers College Press, 2014)

Scarcity: The New Science of Having Less and How It Defines Our Lives by Sendhil Mullainathan (Picador, 2014)

Dream Makers, Dream Breakers: The World of Justice Thurgood Marshall by Carl T. Rowan (Back Bay Books, 1993)

What's Race Got to Do with It? How Current School Reform Policy Maintains Racial and Economic Inequity edited by Edwin Mayorga and Bree Picower (Peter Lang Publishers, 2015)

Reading for Their Life: (Re)Building the Textual Lineages of African American Adolescent Males by Alfred W. Tatum (Heinemann, 2009)

Activity documented by: Philip Weinman, NBCT Engagement Supervisor



Accomplished Leadership Series

Elevating the Profession through Leadership: A New Professional Learning Series

LOCATION: DATE

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National Board Core Propositions
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Agenda:

- Revisiting the Norms
- Gap Analysis
- Student Circle Video
- Community Circle
- Six Word Memoir



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2

Purpose: This series is designed for building leaders. This professional learning opportunity will provide rich, deep, collaborative action-based conversations to allow the personal and professional exploration of accomplished practice in leadership.



Essential Questions:

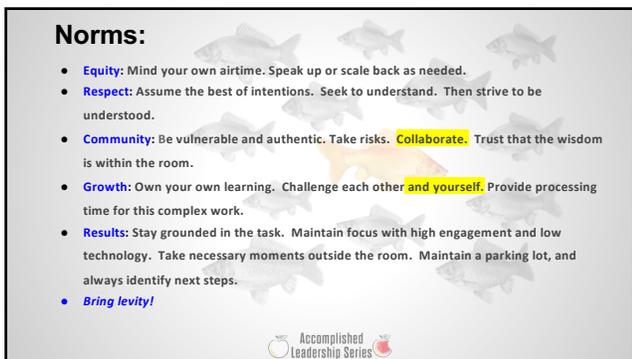
- What does accomplished leadership look like and sound like, in your building, with your population?
- What is the vision? How is it communicated?
- How is student and adult learning managed and monitored?
- How are collaborative partnerships built with families, stakeholders, and communities?

Accomplished Leadership Series

3



4



5



6

Breakout Rooms: Save the Last Word:

Volunteer identifies and reads aloud to the group their chosen statement.

They say nothing else at this time.

Each group member has 1 minute to respond to the passage.

The volunteer then has 2 minutes to share why they chose that part and respond to--or build on-- what they heard from the group



7

GAP ANALYSIS



8

Seeing it in others

Insert video



*Take notes on what the students state about the schools beliefs, policies and practices.
How do they align with your core beliefs?*



9

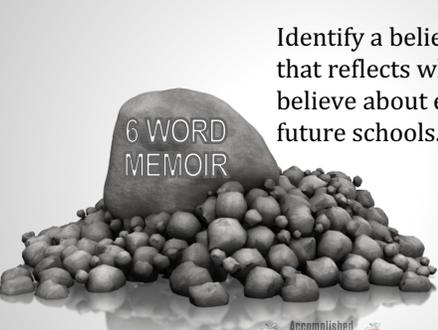


Community Circle

- Why is it so difficult to talk about race?
- Do all of our students have an equal opportunity to learn (OTL)? Explain your response.
- What is one major barrier or challenge we still face?
- How do we make it right for all our students moving forward?

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10



Identify a belief statement that reflects what you believe about equity in our future schools.

6 WORD MEMOIR

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11

FUTURE DATES:

Accomplished Leadership Series

12

Facilitators:

Name

Email



Resources:

www.accomplishedteachingny.org

nbpts.org



13



14

Standard V Culture

Accomplished principals inspire and nurture a culture of high expectations, where actions support the common values and beliefs of the organization. These principals build authentic, productive relationships that foster a collaborative spirit. They honor the culture of the students, adults, and larger community, demonstrating respect for diversity and ensuring equity. They create and maintain a trusting, safe environment that promotes effective adult practice and student learning.

Accomplished principals inspire and nurture a culture that is the heart of the learning community. They are passionately committed to creating and leveraging a culture where every student and adult reaches his or her full potential. These principals foster relationships, encouraging each person who participates in the culture to embody the values, attitudes, and behaviors that the organization acts on and celebrates. Accomplished principals understand that collaboration, collegiality, and efficacy permeate an effective culture of high expectations for student learning.

Accomplished principals create and maintain a learning culture that promotes

- high expectations
- collaborative and collegial relationships
- rituals and behaviors that demonstrate common values and beliefs
- respect for cultural differences, diversity, and equity
- a safe and trusting environment

High Expectations

Accomplished principals build a culture of high expectations for student learning and adult practice. They skillfully shepherd and intentionally navigate all elements of the learning community to develop a collective sense of high expectations, resulting in a high-performing organization where all students learn. These principals lead the creation of a culture that generates excitement, encourages innovation and experimentation, and develops commitment—making continuous improvement and maximum effort the norm. Accomplished principals safeguard a culture that values individuals, strives

for maximum learning for students and adults, and structures a productive and orderly environment.

Accomplished principals lead and model a culture that permeates all facets of the learning organization and extends beyond the campus, inspiring others to get involved. In the learning communities of accomplished principals, the culture is so strong that it is manifested in student behavior on and off campus. For example, if local business owners complain about student behavior, an accomplished principal might empower the students to develop their own code of conduct in collaboration with the business owners.

Accomplished principals nurture a culture that focuses on learning for students, staff, parents, and members of the community at large, one that values all human capital in shaping a learning environment that best suits the needs of all students and stakeholders and the demands of a global society. These principals model entrepreneurship; they access and capitalize on the resources of parents and the community.

Recognizing that culture is the medium through which change is initiated and sustained, accomplished principals skillfully embrace change that complements and advances the culture of the organization. They understand that change for the sake of change is meaningless, adds no value, and will not stand the test of time. When faced with a mandated change, they expertly guide implementation in a way that enhances rather than detracts from the culture.

Collaborative and Collegial Relationships

Accomplished principals foster a culture that emphasizes a collaborative spirit within the learning community. These principals embrace, value, and capitalize on the uniqueness of individuals represented in the learning community. They build and foster positive and productive relationships. These principals work with all stakeholders to create and sustain a positive and caring sense of community that everyone can hear, see, and feel in all interactions. All partners productively engage in creating and sustaining a school with student learning as the focus. There is a strong culture of support for students, where teachers work together to achieve high performance.

Accomplished principals establish trust through teamwork and consensus building. These principals shape and maintain a culture in which adults and students demonstrate personal responsibility. They foster an environment that values effort, persistence, and engagement by all students and staff. High expectations lead to better performance by students, teachers, and everyone else in the learning community.

Rituals and Behaviors that Demonstrate Common Values and Beliefs

In collaboration with adults and students, accomplished principals develop agreed-upon cultural values and norms that are consistent with the vision and mission of the

organization. They expect congruence between the stated values and norms and the actions of the students and adults. These principals form an organizational culture in which adults teach and model the essentials of good character. They unfailingly address individuals who act contrary to the norms by initiating critical conversations designed to maintain a cohesive culture of learning. These principals work with stakeholders to develop a culture that honors the existing and evolving values, beliefs, norms, traditions, and rituals of the learning community. They promote ownership and involvement in all phases of establishing and maintaining such a culture.

Accomplished principals constantly monitor the pulse of the culture. They build systems that incorporate qualitative and quantitative data to monitor and assess the culture, gathering such data through formal and informal means. They use data to initiate critical discussions aimed at enhancing adult practices and student behaviors that are necessary for a trusting, effective culture.

Respect for Cultural Differences, Diversity, and Equity

Accomplished principals collaboratively establish and implement policies, systems, and procedures that promote respect for diverse cultures, ethnicities, and lifestyles, including under-represented segments of the learning community. They engage all members of the learning community in processes that identify values and behaviors related to eliminating bias, intolerance, and inequity. Within established policy, these principals build and maintain a culture that fosters a free exchange of ideas and opinions without fear of retribution.

Accomplished principals respect the cultural differences in a global society and make diversity a means for enriching the culture of the learning community. They work to establish a culture in which students find relevancy and are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to succeed. In the learning communities of accomplished principals, diversity is celebrated as a strength and as a tool for learning and growing. Accomplished principals analyze and monitor classroom activities and assignments for cultural sensitivity and relevance. Accomplished principals respect elements of student culture that support and are relevant to the learning environment. For example, they recognize that students may use multiple forms of technology for building relationships, communicating, and learning. These principals encourage taking responsibility and provide opportunities for bridging the differences among students' culture, parents' culture, and staff members' culture for the betterment of the learning environment.

Accomplished principals understand that all students need role models and advocates with whom they can relate. When some groups are not represented by the staff, for example, these principals reach out into the community to find volunteers to fill this need.

Sequence of Events in a Circle

The sequence of events is important. If you establish a Circle Pattern from the beginning, and use it consistently, students will know what to expect. The following sequence works well, although not every element is included in every circle. Each step in the sequence is discussed below.

Starting the Circle 5-10 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arrive (circle keeper centers self) 2. State the purpose of the circle 3. Open the Circle 4. Teach and Remember Circle Guidelines 5. Make and Remember Agreements
Doing the Work of the Circle 15-30 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Connection: Check in Round with Talking Piece; 7. Core Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Building/Connection • Restorative Practices Content or Deeper Connection. 8. Closure: Check out Round
Ending the Circle 5 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Close the circle 10. Debrief with colleagues



Step 1: Arrive (before the circle): Check in with yourself prior to starting the circle. Assess your energy level, your emotional state, physical condition, and anything else that will have an impact on how you show up as a circle keeper. The goal is not necessarily to change anything, but simply to be aware. This awareness of your actual condition can be a powerful ally in circle keeping.

Step 2: Opening the Circle: After the students are seated in a circle, it is very helpful to have a routine that you use as a ceremony at the beginning of each circle. This marks a transition from regular classroom time into the “special” non-ordinary time of circle.

This is a good time to place items into the center of the circle to help give it focus. Some teachers read a poem or some inspirational prose, or place a battery-powered candle or flowers in the center.

Step 3: Teach Circle Guidelines: Remind the class of, or ask them to recall, the guidelines that reliably help circles function well. Write them on the board as students recall or use posters. They are:

1. **Respect the talking piece**
 - a. Give those who hold it your full attention
 - b. When you are holding it give full attention to your truth
 - c. Speak to the center of the circle

- d. Handle the talking piece respectfully
2. **Speak from the heart:** Speak for yourself: your perspectives, needs, experiences
 - a. Trust that what comes from the heart will be what the circle needs
3. **Listen from the heart:** Let go of stories that make it hard to hear others
4. **Say just enough:** without feeling rushed, say what you need to say (“lean expression”)
5. Trust that you will know what to say when it is your turn to speak: no need to rehearse

Step 4: Make and Remember Agreements: In addition to the intentions, which apply to all circles, each individual class should be given multiple opportunities to make additional agreements, for example about confidentiality, gossip, and so on. Let the group find its own wording. Use a like “fists to five” to generate consensus. All agreements should be by consensus. Agreements are not imposed by an authority; they are negotiated by the group.

Step 5: Connection: Do a check in Round with the talking piece. Begin every circle with a check-in round, in which all students are invited to respond to a question. This gives students a chance to put their voice into the circle and feel connected. In the first circles, keep this question very low-risk, and make it progressively more personal at a pace the circle can handle. It can be helpful to ask students for ideas about check-in questions. Relevant questions are preferable...meaning those questions that have to do with the actual situation. So, if the students have just returned from a holiday, a relevant question might be “share something memorable from your holiday.”

Step 6: Responding to Challenging Circumstances: Restorative Content. If there are “live” issues to discuss, this is the time to move into them with restorative dialogue. It is important to name the issue clearly and accurately; it’s best when this comes from the students, but can also work when issues are named by the teacher. Lessons 3 and 4 in Part 3 of this manual help students learn how to identify and name issues. Note that the approach used in these lessons is to *learn about* restorative dialogue by *engaging in* it, through progressively more direct and challenging dialogues.

Step 7: Closure Question. Ask students to comment on their experience in the circle. If you have very little time (as is often the case) ask for a two-word checkout: “Say two words about your experience in the circle today.” This “rounds out” the circle.

Step 8: Close the circle: In a way that is intentional—perhaps even a bit theatrical—put away the center, ring a bell, or make some other small gesture to signal moving back from circle time into ordinary time.

Step 9: Debrief with colleagues: What did you learn? Any surprises? What memorable things happened that you want to remember? What frustrations did you encounter? Find a trusted friendly colleague who is also doing circles and debrief each week with these questions or similar ones. Sit in a circle and use a talking piece...trust the circle!



Reviewing and agreeing on the principles below can help us have candid discussions about racism with our educational leaders.

- *Assume that, at any given moment in the conversation, the other person is doing the best he or she can.* Chances are, it's true.
- *Forgive yourself and others for making mistakes,* including inexact wording, muddled thinking, or unintended use of stereotypes.
- *Suppress hidden agendas* and the urge to preach or politicize.
- *Remain non accusatory when you see things differently from another.* Use phrases like, "It's been my experience that ____," "Tell me more about____," or "How did faculty at your last school respond to ____?"
- *Seek first to understand,* then to be understood (Covey, 2013).
- *If you disagree with someone, paraphrase that person's point before responding.* It helps him know that his comments were heard and considered.
- *Avoid language that blames* ("If it weren't for white people. ..." "They're always speaking Spanish together, so they must not want me around." "You're blind to white privilege.") Blaming thwarts honest conversation.
- *Don't ask anyone to speak for a whole race* if there's only one student or colleague in the group from a particular culture or race.
- *Acknowledge that candid conversation makes us all vulnerable.* Teachers' inner selves are on view daily by many constituencies—students, parents, administrators, and the general public. They are also subject to self-doubts and high expectations of professionalism. As a result, they may be hesitant to open those vulnerability gates too widely.
- *Avoid associating the quality of a colleague's teaching with exploratory comments offered in conversation about racism.* A peer can be a neophyte in such conversations, but effective in the classroom.



Action-Based Conversations:

Facilitator’s Guide to Exploring Accomplished Practice in Leadership

Core Prop 7: Accomplished educational leaders model professional, ethical behavior and expect it from others.

(National Board Standard 8; PSEL Standard 2: Ethics)

Title: Professionalism and Ethics

Brief Description: Educational leaders will explore some of the common areas of ethical and professional challenges that they face in their schools and classrooms on a daily basis. Leaders will formulate strategies to successfully navigate these challenges while providing support to staff, students and parents.

“Accomplished principals hold themselves accountable to the values and beliefs of the organization and know that their behavioural congruence is a core component in their ability to lead well.”

Outcome-based objectives:

<i>Objectives</i>
Participants will identify the ethical challenges that confront teachers and leaders daily in their schools.
Participants will examine their own personal and professional ethics and the way they influence their work within their organization.
Participants will collaboratively develop strategies to help them face their challenges and establish a culture in which ethical behavior is practised by all stakeholders.

Length/Timing: 90 minutes

Materials or Special Set-up Required:

Chart paper, Post-It notes, highlighters, paper with Standard VIII - Ethics (plus statement) at the top for activity 1, copies of article: [20 Ethical Questions to ask at Your School by Susan Hansen](#)

Process:	<i>Notes</i>
Participants will explore ethical dilemmas within your current organization. Distribute Standard VIII “blank page” and ask participants to brainstorm the most recent ethical dilemma that they faced in their current position. Ask them to jot down some notes about the circumstances.	~ 5 min



Accomplished Leadership Series

<p>Ask participants to organize into pairs or trios to share their ethical issues with their partners. Allow time for each participant to share out.</p>	<p>~15 Min</p>
<p>Ask participants to read, annotate, and/or highlight the corresponding pages of the Draft NB Core Prop / Standard 8 - Ethics. After reading, chart the noticings of the group on chart paper. Finding the significant quotes, interesting language used within the standard. or:</p> <p>Select a section/quote/ or language in the Standard that might apply to the circumstance described in the opening. How might your practice be informed or shift should you confront a similar situation in the future?</p>	<p>~20 Min</p>
<p>Distribute copies of the article: 20 Ethical Questions to ask at Your School by Susan Hansen</p> <p>Assign participant groups of two to four (depending on the size of the whole group or time constraints) of the ethical questions discussed in the article and have them discuss their assigned questions with a focus on how they would address the issue within their current position. Participants are asked to summarize their discussion and thinking on each question to be shared out with the group.</p> <p>Groups will T chart the questions from . the article on one side and the pertinent standard language or thinking on the other side</p>	<p>~40 Min (includes sharing)</p>
<p>Summary discussion on Core Prop 7 and Standard 8: Ask for participant's reflection on their thinking and wonderings about the activity. How can this thinking assist in creating a culture of ethics within your organization?</p>	<p>~ 10 min</p>

Source(s):

Activity documented by: Christopher Chank, NBCT, House Principal Grade 10



Accomplished Leadership Series

Elevating the Profession through Leadership: A New Professional Learning Series

LOCATION: DATE

NATIONAL BOARD
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National Board Core Propositions
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Agenda:

- A Recent Dilemma
- Pairs and Trios
- Standard 8: Read and Chart
- Relating to Real Life
- Jigsawing Ethical Questions
- Reflection



Accomplished Leadership Series

2

Purpose: This series is designed for building leaders. This professional learning opportunity will provide rich, deep, collaborative action-based conversations to allow the personal and professional exploration of accomplished practice in leadership.



Essential Questions:

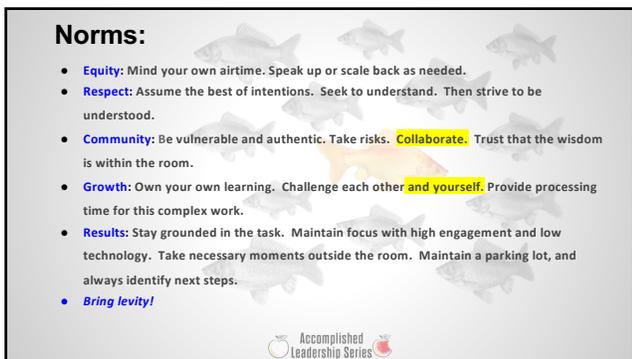
- What does accomplished leadership look like and sound like, in your building, with your population?
- What is the vision? How is it communicated?
- How is student and adult learning managed and monitored?
- How are collaborative partnerships built with families, stakeholders, and communities?

Accomplished Leadership Series

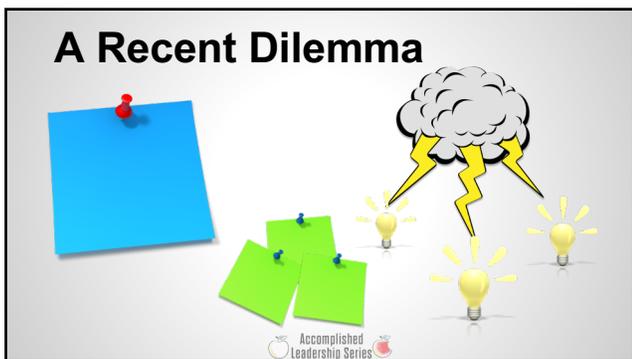
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4



5



6

Trios Share Out



Accomplished Leadership Series

7

“Accomplished educational leaders are ethical. They consistently demonstrate a high degree of personal and professional ethics exemplified by integrity, justice, and equity. These leaders establish a culture in which exemplary ethical behavior is practiced by all stakeholders.”

Standard 8



Accomplished Leadership Series

8

Select a section/quote/ or language in the Standard that might apply to the circumstance described in the opening. How might your practice be informed or shift should you confront a similar situation in the future?

Read and Chart



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9

Relating to Life



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10

Jigsawing: Ethical Questions



discuss their assigned questions with a focus on how they would address the issue within their current position. Participants are asked to summarize their discussion and thinking on each question to be shared out with the group.

Accomplished Leadership Series

11

Reflection



How can this thinking assist in creating a culture of ethics within your organization?

Accomplished Leadership Series

12

Twenty Ethical Questions to Ask at Your School

And How to Determine the Best Legal and Ethical Answers

©2009 by Susan Hansen, M.S.

These questions address some common “gray areas” in legal and ethical areas of public education. The answers were researched with Arizona standards in mind, but may be applicable elsewhere. ***Please check laws and the school counseling ethical standards in your area before taking action on these topics.***

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## **1. Who makes CPS reports and what is the procedure for making a report? Does that answer change depending on whether the suspected abuse is physical, sexual, or verbal?**

**Common answer that creates an ethical dilemma:** Although CPS has made it very clear in the past few years that *the adult who first receives information from a student about possible abuse* is the one who needs to make the report, many schools and districts are still following the old procedure of having one designated person on campus make all CPS reports.

**Best answer based on ethical standards and/or the law:** Offer a training to all staff about how to make a CPS report (the steps are simple). If you want to have a CPS liaison on campus, designate one knowledgeable person who will facilitate the reports, but still require the first person who received the information to make the actual call and fill out the paperwork.

## **2. What is the confidentiality policy regarding student use of alcohol or drugs off campus? Where is the line drawn about when parents are contacted?**

**Common answer that creates an ethical dilemma:** Many districts, or individual schools, create a policy regarding off-campus alcohol or drug use based on what’s most practical for the school, rather than on what’s ethical or legal. For instance, some districts say they don’t call parents if a student reports off-campus “experimental” use of alcohol or marijuana, and only call if there is “obvious imminent danger,” and the policy is often inconsistently followed. This adheres on one level to the ethical standards, (breaking confidentiality when there is imminent danger), but ignores the legal issues at hand.

**Best answer based on ethical standards and/or the law:** Let students and parents know up front that any and all reports of alcohol or drug use off campus will result in an immediate phone call home, and emphasize that the focus will still be on helping and supporting the student, rather than just informing on them. This way students can decide whether they want to reveal that information, knowing what the outcome will be.

Alternatively, if your district does have an “obvious imminent danger only” policy, specify in writing what the parameters of the policy include, and make sure every staff member has a copy. Prepare for angry parents and possible lawsuits if parents find out that their student who is now in rehab or a juvenile facility revealed alcohol or drug use to his/her school counselor six months ago.

### **3. What is the confidentiality policy regarding student sexual activity? Where is the line drawn about when parents are contacted?**

**Common answer that creates an ethical dilemma:** In the state of Arizona, it is illegal for *anyone* under 18 to have sex, but many schools, especially large high schools, do not contact parents about student sexual activity, based on the fact that sexual activity in itself is not considered “imminently dangerous.” The decision is also often based on the high numbers of sexually active teens and the objection that if school staff had to make a phone call home every time they found out a student was sexually active, that’s all they would do all day long.

**Best answer based on ethical standards and/or the law:** To follow the letter of the law, let students know up front that any and all reports of sexual activity (intercourse) by a minor will result in an immediate phone call home, and emphasize that the focus will still be on helping and supporting the student, rather than just informing on them. This way students can decide whether they want to reveal that information, knowing what the outcome will be.

Alternatively, if your district does have an “obvious imminent danger only” policy, specify in writing what the parameters of the policy include, and make sure every staff member has a copy. Prepare for angry parents and possible lawsuits if parents find out that their student who is now HIV positive, pregnant, or fathering a child, revealed information about being sexually active to his/her school counselor six months ago.

One other consideration: Although it doesn’t seem to be officially written anywhere, CPS has confirmed by phone (on several occasions during 2007 and 2008) that they expect a report to be filed if any student aged 13 or younger reports having intercourse, if a minor has sex with anyone over 18 (even if their birthdays are only a month apart, but one is 17 and one is 18), or if there are more than two years’ difference in age between sexually active minors. CPS considers each situation individually and acts accordingly.

### **4. What is the confidentiality policy regarding suspected or confirmed student pregnancy? Under what circumstances are parents contacted, who calls, and how is the call handled?**

**Common answer that creates an ethical dilemma:** While most school counselors will call home if a student is pregnant (based on health and safety risks for the student), some larger schools and districts actually have an official policy where counselors are not allowed to call parents about this, citing that this is “personal business, not academic business.”

On the other end of the continuum, occasionally a school counselor will call a parent when a student reports a pregnancy, only to find out later that the student had misinformation about sex and pregnancy, and assumed she was pregnant because she French kissed a boy.

**Best answer based on ethical standards and/or the law:** First of all, see question #3 and the accompanying answers, all of which are relevant here. Second, pregnancy clearly indicates potential health and safety risks for students, and a need for medical and nutritional attention, and so requires a phone call home just for those reasons. Third, if there were medical complications and a student had a

miscarriage or her own health problems associated with pregnancy, and the parents found out that the student had reported the pregnancy to the school, the potential for a lawsuit is very high.

So, let the student know up front that in the case of a confirmed pregnancy, you must call home, simply for health and safety reasons. You can have a list of exceptions to confidentiality posted in your office, or hand out an information sheet the first time you meet a student, or publish the list in the student handbook and have students and parents sign off on it at the beginning of each school year.

I would recommend first asking the student how the pregnancy was confirmed (pregnancy test, visit to a doctor, etc.), and then let the student know you will be calling home. Ask if she has a preference about which parent you call. Ask if she would like to make the call with you present (you dial, and confirm that you're talking to a parent before handing the phone to the student), or if she would like to stay in the room with you while you call.

**Call the parent immediately.** Many school counselors have historically given the student a few days to tell her parents, but in recent years, there have been students who left the counselor's office, went home and attempted suicide (completed suicide in one East Valley district), attempted to trigger an abortion, or have done something equally dangerous. Don't wait!

When you get the parent on the phone, be sure to ask if he or she can talk privately for a few minutes, rather than just blurting out the information while the parent is at work or on the freeway! Once past the initial stage of the conversation, recommend that the student see a doctor as soon as possible, and ask if you can support the student or the parent in any way.

##### **5. What is the school's plan for a crisis, such as a student or teacher death? Does the school communicate what happened to students, faculty, and parents, and if so, how? How are students in crisis supported?**

**Common answer that creates an ethical dilemma:** Some schools and district have phenomenal, highly effective and efficient crisis plans that run like clockwork and do exactly what they're designed to do. However, many schools and districts don't really have a plan in place for a school wide crisis. Some just don't see it as a necessity until they've actually had such a crisis with hundreds or thousands of students on campus. Many new schools or growing districts haven't had time to create a specific site-based plan, and some schools simply haven't experienced a campus-wide crisis and don't think they need a plan.

**Best answer based on ethical standards:** Find out if there is a specific crisis plan at your school or district level. If there is one, ask for specific training about how the plan is implemented and who is responsible for what. If there is no plan, check with neighboring schools or districts, and see if your school can adapt an existing plan to meet your needs. You can also search the internet for existing crisis plans. There are some very good ones posted on different district's websites. At the very least, find out what you will be expected or required to do (and where your administrator wants you to be) in the event of a crisis on your campus. If you know at least that much, you can have a head start and be that much more prepared when your help is needed.

## 6. What is the school's specific policy regarding bullying?

**Common answer that creates an ethical dilemma:** Many schools and districts will say, "We have a zero-tolerance policy on bullying," but there are no specifics, and they cannot go on to describe how they define bullying, how they address students who bully (including consequences and counseling), how they help those who are being bullied, and what they are doing to prevent and intervene on bullying on their campuses.

**Best answer based on ethical standards and/or the law:** HB2368 states the following:

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Requires school district governing boards to adopt and enforce procedures that prohibit the harassment, bullying and intimidation of pupils on school grounds, school property, school buses, school bus stops and at school sponsored events and activities. The procedures must contain the following:

A confidential process that allows pupils to report incidents of harassment, intimidation or bullying to school officials.

A procedure for the parents or guardians of pupils to submit written reports concerning harassment, intimidation or bullying to school officials.

A requirement that school district employees report suspected harassment, intimidation or bullying.

A formal process for the documentation and investigation of reported incidents of harassment, intimidation or bullying.

A formal process for an investigation of suspected incidents of harassment, intimidation or bullying.

Disciplinary procedures for students admitting to, or who are found guilty of, committing harassment, intimidation or bullying.

A procedure that provides consequences for submitting false reports of harassment, intimidation or bullying.

Adds the school district and school district employees to those groups that are immune from civil liability for the consequences of adoption and implementation of policies and procedures regarding school district governing board requirements under Section 15-341, subsection A and the discretionary powers of school district governing boards under Section 15-342, unless guilty of gross negligence or intentional misconduct.

Makes technical and conforming changes.

47th Legislature

First Regular Session 2 April 15, 2005

Signed by the Governor April 20, 2005

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So, if your school or district has no specific policy, create or find one. There are many posted online, and there are also many programs, such as the Olweus materials, that offer ideas and curriculum designed to prevent and address bullying. Addressing this issue is now a legal necessity, not just an ethical dilemma.

**7. What is the school’s policy regarding sexual harassment between students? At what point, if any, are students suspended, and at what point, if any, are the police involved?**

**Common answer that creates an ethical dilemma:** Many districts have no policy about sexual harassment, even though it is illegal, not just unethical. Some say the same things they say about bullying, “We have a zero-tolerance policy,” but they have no specifics to back it up. Often even if there is a policy, it is inconsistently enforced.

**Best answer based on ethical standards and/or the law:** Know the law and the definition of sexual harassment: “*Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.*” Find a list of specific behaviors that qualify, and make the list available to staff, and to students when needed. And know that it’s also particularly important for students to be aware that “*continued expressions of sexual interest after being informed that the interest is unwelcome*” is when it’s crucial to report the harassment to an adult.

Teach students to say directly to the person making the sexual advances or remarks, “Stop saying (or doing) things like that. I’m not interested and I don’t like that.” And let the students know that once they’ve stated that they don’t like it and asked or told the other person to stop, if the other person does it again, it’s now officially sexual harassment and is against the law. Teach students how to document and report, and have a specific policy for how it will be addressed. There may be a matrix or a continuum of consequences based on the severity of the behavior. Spell it out and make it available to all. Follow through.

Know that it may be appropriate at times for school officials to call the police, especially if there’s a physical component to the harassment. School officials and students can make police reports, but schools don’t typically press charges – that’s up to the student’s parents.

**8. If a student stated that a teacher was sexually inappropriate with him or her, what would be the procedure for handling the situation? Who at school would be part of the process?**

**Common answer that creates an ethical dilemma:** Sometimes a school counselor hearing this information will approach the teacher in order to get the other side of the story. If this were purely an ethical issue, rather than a legal issue, this would be the ethically correct course of action. Because it’s a legal issue, going directly to the teacher involved can create legal problems for the teacher, the counselor, and the school.

**Best answer based on ethical standards and/or the law:** Tell the student that you *must* report this to the school administration because it’s a legal matter and a safety risk. If possible, have the student write out what happened and sign the statement. If you get a written and signed statement, make a copy of it to keep on file as part of your documentation. Encourage the student to tell his or her parents about what happened, and for them to contact the school. Take your information directly to your administrator (the original written statement if you have one, or just what you know verbally), state what was said to you, and state that you don’t know the whole story, but that you know you need to turn it over to the administration because of the legalities. Document everything including dates and times of your discussions. Keep it all on file in a locked filing cabinet.

Most likely you will be completely out of the situation at this point until it's handled legally. Usually the administrator, not the counselor, will notify the parents. Ask your administrator to keep you posted, since you still may need to have contact with this student for other reasons (schedule changes, etc.), and you need to know whether you can listen if the student wants to talk about it with you, or if the parents contact you (you will probably not be allowed to interact with the student or parents about the matter while the case is open). If you have a concern that your administrator has not taken any action on the matter, ask him or her directly for an update.

If there is no update, because no action has been taken, you now have an ethical concern about your administrator. Follow the ethical standards, which means going to your administrator's supervisor. Once again, document everything. Keep following up until you know for sure that legal action has been taken. You don't need to know the details – just that something is being done, so the student is no longer at risk. And someone, somewhere, needs to notify the parents about what's happening if they haven't been notified yet. It's better for the administration to do this, or the administrator's supervisor, than for the counselor to do it. But it needs to be done.

## **9. What is the policy regarding reporting students who lie, cheat, or steal at school?**

**Common answer that creates an ethical dilemma:** There is often no clear policy because each situation needs to be considered individually. Much can be resolved at the classroom level. Larger issues of cheating and stealing will require discipline at the administrative level, and occasionally police involvement (such as a situation where a student breaks into the school and steals money from the concession stand). But because there often isn't one clearly stated policy, the responses that teachers, counselors, and administrators have may be inconsistent.

**Best answer based on ethical standards and/or the law:** Lying, if it's on a personal level, can often be addressed in the classroom or in the counselor's office. If a student has been caught cheating or stealing, the teacher and/or administrator need to take care of the behavioral consequences, and the counselor may then work with the student to find out what's behind the behaviors and help the student build new skills and practice honesty and integrity. If a student has been accused, but not caught, sometimes a teacher or administrator will send the student to the counselor "to get it all figured out." The counselor may talk with the student, build a rapport, and eventually get to the truth (or not), but behavioral consequences are outside the scope of the school counselor and need to be left to the teacher or administrator.

## **10. What is the policy regarding reporting students who lie, cheat, or steal off campus?**

**Common answer that creates an ethical dilemma:** Sometimes it's difficult to know where to draw the line between school life and personal life. Some school counselors call home if they find out a student is stealing or breaking a law off campus, stating that it's ethical to do so because the student has put his or her health and safety at risk. Others don't. Some schools have a policy about it; others don't. A pattern of lying or cheating off campus is more an issue for the counselor than for administration, especially if a parent or other students bring it to the counselor's attention. Then the focus is on helping the student, not on consequences.

**Best answer based on ethical standards and/or the law:** Decide on the specifics of a policy about this, before the school year begins, and include it in the student handbook to be signed off by students and parents.

If there is no policy, and you're not sure what to do, consult with another counselor on campus or with your supervisor, without giving the student's name. Ask for input, and base your decision on the bottom line concern of student health and safety, or imminent danger. Leave discipline to parents, administration, and police. As a school counselor, focus on the well-being of the student and do what you can to help him or her address the underlying issues. If the student is stealing, find out if there is financial need in the family, and refer to the social worker or a community agency if needed. If it's not about financial need, do what you can at the school counseling level and refer out if the underlying issues go beyond the scope of support and into a need for therapy.

### **11. What is the policy regarding giving student information to non-custodial parents?**

**Common answer that creates an ethical dilemma:** Many schools and districts have a policy that allows one parent to fill out forms at the beginning of the school year specifying who can pick up their child from school, and this becomes the "official" basis of who is allowed to have information about the student. Often in the case of a heated divorce or custody battle, one parent will inform someone in the office that the school is not to give any information to the other parent, and school officials will accept this. Many schools operate under the assumption that if one parent has primary or sole custody, the other is no longer entitled to any information about the child.

**Best answer based on ethical standards and/or the law:** Both parents are allowed to receive information about the child, regardless of custody, unless there is a specific court order (and the school has a copy on file) stating that one parent's parental rights have been terminated, or a similar court order specifically stating that the parent is not to have any information. This is exceedingly rare. The issue of custody itself is not grounds to withhold information from a parent.

### **12. What is the policy regarding giving out community resource referrals such as counselor's names, literature, websites, etc?**

**Common answer that creates an ethical dilemma:** Some schools and districts allow counselors to freely give referral information of all kinds. Others don't allow any referrals to be made for fear that the district will be required to pay for services suggested by the school. Still others are unsure and choose to give only general information.

**Best answer based on ethical standards:** School and districts may create a policy about what kinds of referral information can be given to students and parents (and some districts put together an approved list that is distributed district-wide), but it *is* appropriate for referrals to be given. The Ethical Standards state that the school counselor "is aware of and utilizes related professionals, organizations and other resources to whom the student may be referred." School counselors are encouraged to give multiple referral options rather than just naming one person or one organization.

The issue of the school or district having to pay for counseling or other services is typically relevant only in special education where services are “required” according to the IEP, or in the case of a behavioral contract where students are required to receive certain services or evaluations before returning to school. Those decisions are typically made by administration or the IEP team, not the counselor. Best bet for school counselors: Suggest rather than requiring, give several options, and encourage parents in writing (on your list of suggestions) to “consider options and make whatever choice feels right for you and your family.”

**13. What is the policy about working with a student who is seeing an outside counselor? (Do you contact the counselor, and if so, how do you go about getting permission or a release of information from the parent?)**

**Common answer that creates an ethical dilemma:** Many school counselors (maybe even most school counselors) are unaware of this as an ethical issue. Most school counselors don’t contact outside counselors unless the parent happens to request it and gives the school counselor the name and contact information of the outside counselor.

**Best answer based on ethical standards:** The Ethical Standards for School Counselors states: “If a student is receiving services from another counselor or mental health professional, the counselor, with student and/or parent/guardian consent, will inform the other professional and develop clear agreements to avoid confusion and conflict for the student.” This is in the best interest of the student so that the school counselor and outside counselor are not unintentionally contradicting or undermining each other, which can create more problems for the student.

The school counselor is required to make an attempt at getting consent to contact the outside counselor. There may be a consent form to fill out (from the school or from the outside counselor) in order to exchange information. If the parent or guardian will not give consent, then the counselor can document the attempt, and ask the student general questions such as, “What kinds of suggestions has your counselor given you for situations like this?” with the intent of being able to add to or support what the other counselor is doing, rather than giving conflicting information.

**14. What is the policy regarding student cell phone use, text messages, pictures phones, audio or video recordings, etc?**

**Common answer that creates an ethical dilemma:** Many schools have a policy prohibiting electronics on campus during the school day, but often the policies are not enforced, or are enforced by some faculty members but not by others. Aside from the obvious distractions and interruptions, students have learned how to cheat on tests by taking pictures of the tests with their cell phones and forwarding them to other students (who have the test later in the day), or by sending text messages to each other during tests. There are also various reports of students photographing, and audio or video-recording others (teachers and classmates) without permission, and then posting the results on the internet. This can create all kinds of problems, legally and otherwise.

**Best answer based on ethical standards:** Create a school wide policy prohibiting electronics on campus during the school day, and consistently enforce the rules. Create a policy where electronics are confiscated the moment they are seen or heard, bagged and tagged (usually a zippered plastic bag that can be marked with the student's name), and sent to the office where only parents can retrieve them. On campuses where this is done consistently, the problem usually dramatically decreases very quickly.

### **15. What, if any, is the policy regarding MySpace (and other online social networking sites)?**

**Common answer that creates an ethical dilemma:** Most schools and districts say they don't need a policy regarding MySpace, because there is a firewall in place and the students can't access it at school. However, there are various ways that students can access it anyway, including proxy sites where they enter a web address that isn't caught by the firewall, which then takes them to MySpace.

Also, there are many cases of cyber-bullying, which school officials decline to deal with because they originated outside of school. However, the bullying often continues at school in the form of side comments, exclusion, and references to what was posted on MySpace, in which case it is something that needs to be addressed at school, because the bullying is continuing at school.

**Best answer based on ethical standards and/or the law:** When a student comes to you about bullying that originated on MySpace or a similar online community, listen and validate feelings (which counselors would do about almost any situation, whether it happened at school or not), determine whether the student feels safe at school, whether the cyber-bullying included any threats to the student's physical safety, and whether the bullying has continued at school. If there's any overlap between home and school, address it. You can send students to peer mediation if you have that program on your campus, or facilitate a mediation between students yourself.

Also, encourage students to print the screen where the bullying or threats appear and keep it as documentation, and to bring it to their parents' attention. If the bullying is severe, or contains obvious threats to the student's safety, parents can pursue police reports, restraining orders, and harassment charges if they choose.

### **16. What is the policy or procedure if numerous students complain about a specific teacher's behavior?**

**Common answer that creates an ethical dilemma:** Many schools don't have a specific policy about this, which unfortunately means that students believe that they have no recourse even if a teacher is actually behaving unethically or unprofessionally. If students do speak up, they are often told to wait it out, or not to create problems. Counselors may believe it's an issue for administration to deal with, and administration may send students to the counselor. Many times, nothing is done.

**Best answer based on ethical standards:** It's difficult to know when a problem lies with the teacher, and when it lies with the student or students. It's also difficult to know exactly what the counselor's role is in this situation. If you are a school counselor and hearing numerous complaints from students about a particular teacher, ask the students (individually) to document the things that are said or done by the

teacher over a week's time, including dates, times, and direct quotes from the teacher whenever possible. Specifics are always more helpful than general complaints.

Encourage students to deal with the issues directly whenever possible, with a focus on resolution rather than power struggle. Validate students' feelings without judging or putting down the teacher. Teach students how to use "I" statements and set boundaries respectfully with the teacher, and ask them to document the results of those conversations. Encourage students to talk with their parents about their concerns, and encourage parents to communicate directly with teachers before taking an issue to administration, unless the teacher's behavior appears to put students' health or safety at risk, or clearly violates students' rights or laws.

If you have concerns after hearing specific examples of the teacher's comments or behaviors, consult with a colleague (another counselor or your supervisor, or possibly an administrator) to determine the best next steps. If you do consult an administrator, consider giving the situation as a hypothetical "what if" situation, without naming the teacher at this stage, and asking for the administrator's input about the best steps to take. The answers may differ depending on whether the teacher's behavior is actually dangerous, illegal, discriminatory, or simply poor judgment.

If the issue has legal overtones, it's best for the administration to handle it. If the behavior is legal but unproductive (such as a teacher who repeatedly makes sarcastic jokes at students' expense, or dismisses students' questions about class work as "obvious," "stupid," etc.), and the administration doesn't feel the need to address it, you can encourage students and parents to continue to communicate directly with the teacher if possible, or to file a complaint or talk with someone at the district level if they believe the problem warrants that.

Having said that, there are times when a friendly conversation between the school counselor and the teacher may have an impact – it has happened! If you choose to go this route, see the article, "Tips For Approaching a Colleague When You Have an Ethical Concern." Approach from a place of concern for the teacher and students, not from a stance of judgment or punishment. Ask for clarification; offer to help if you can.

## **17. What is the policy about student petitions or strikes?**

**Common answer that creates an ethical dilemma:** Most schools and districts don't have a formal policy about this, because petitions and strikes are more rare now than they were a generation ago. There's often a lack of clarity about what's legal and allowable in terms of student protest on a school campus.

**Best answer based on ethical standards and/or the law:** Students do have the right to voice their views, but are limited in the ways they can do so on a school campus. As a school counselor, you can encourage many positive ways for students to express their views on subjects that are important to them. Encourage students to make an appointment with administrators to express their concerns (and role-play the most productive ways to do this); write assertive and pro-active letters to the newspaper (school or local), principal, or school board; organize clubs, speakers, or activities related to their concerns; get permission to post notices or posters on school bulletin boards, set up information tables, conduct polls, or

hand out fliers.

Let students know that they can express views, but they *cannot* block pathways or entrances, keep others from going to class, disrupt the educational process, or leave campus without permission during the school day, or they will face school (and possibly legal) consequences.

### **18. What is the policy or procedure if a student reports that a parent or other adult is breaking the law?**

**Common answer that creates an ethical dilemma:** Many schools and districts are inconsistent in addressing this issue. Some believe it's personal business and not school business. Others immediately call the police and CPS if a student reports that a parent is breaking a law. The outcome is that without a clear policy, counselors aren't sure what to do, so the issues often go unaddressed.

**Best answer based on ethical standards and/or the law:** The bottom line questions are, "Is the student's health or safety at risk?" and "How imminent is the risk?" If the student reports that her father has cheated on his taxes for the last five years, the answer is probably no. If the student reports that her mother is operating a meth lab in the spare bedroom, or that her father robbed the nearby convenience store last night while she and her three younger siblings were waiting in the car, the answer is yes.

If you are unsure, call CPS and say that you are concerned about a situation, but are not sure it qualifies as a report. CPS workers are happy to listen to the details of the situation and advise you whether or not it constitutes a report. They will also advise you about whether or not to contact the police. In any case, document your call to CPS and what they advised.

### **19. What is the policy or procedure if there is sexual activity reported between a student and a teacher?**

**Common answer that creates an ethical dilemma:** This is very similar to question #8, with the exception that in this case, the student may have consented to sex or may be willingly participating in a romantic relationship with the teacher. The mistake many counselors may make is to interview the student and also approach the teacher to get clarification. If this were a purely ethical issue, that would be the appropriate course of action, but because it's a legal issue, it needs to be immediately turned over to administration.

**Best answer based on ethical standards and/or the law:** When you hear this information, immediately report it to your administrator. Let him or her know that you just heard the information and have not spoken to the student or the teacher. Typically the administration will call the district level officials and the teacher will be placed on administrative leave pending an investigation. Do not approach the student until you have permission to do so, which is usually not until after the case is closed.

Once the case is closed, if the student still attends your school, you may be able to get permission to talk with him or her to offer support and stress management strategies. Carefully guard confidentiality, and focus on what the student needs to regain emotional balance and manage stress, rather than asking specific

questions about what happened. Often it's acceptable for you to listen if a student chooses to talk about the situation, but not for you to ask further questions.

## 20. What is the policy or procedure regarding searches of students or their belongings?

**Common answer that creates an ethical dilemma:** Students and school officials seem to have a variety of beliefs about what's legal in terms of searching a student's belongings, backpack, lockers, or having a student empty his or her pockets, etc. Some are hesitant to do any searching for fear of breaking laws or violating rights, and others perform random searches whenever they choose.

**Best answer based on ethical standards and/or the law:** The Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution describes citizens' rights against "unreasonable" search and seizure. School officials need "reasonable suspicion" in order to search, but the definition of reasonable suspicion is not particularly clear. School resource officers, or police officers, need "probable cause," which is more specific and more limited than "reasonable suspicion." In short, school officials can usually search students' belongings if they have any reasonable suspicion that they will find contraband there (cigarettes, lighters, weapons, drugs, or anything else illegal).

If your administrator asks you to conduct or participate in a search, and you would rather not do so because it threatens the rapport and trust you have with the student, it is reasonable to ask the administrator if someone else can do it. However, if the administrator insists that you do it, I would suggest letting the student know that you're uncomfortable in this situation, and being as respectful as possible while conducting the search. For instance, asking a student to empty his backpack often feels less violating for the student than searching through the backpack yourself.

You may also be able to offer the student a choice, saying, "Your bag will probably be searched. Would you be more comfortable if I did it, or if someone in the office did it?" Sometimes the student would actually prefer for you to do it if he or she trusts you. I would also highly recommend only conducting a search of student belongings with another adult present.

## A Final Note:

This information was prepared by Susan Hansen, M.S., after extensive interviews with school counselors from 2006 to 2008, and several conversations with CPS, Phoenix area police departments, and with information from the Ethical Standards For School Counselors (2004).

If any of these questions arise at your school, please check your school and district policies, and stay updated on changes in Arizona laws. Talk with your colleagues, supervisors, and administrators before taking any action if you are unsure about something.

A great resource for Arizona laws regarding minors in Arizona is [www.lawforkids.org](http://www.lawforkids.org), which is hosted by an Arizona attorney. Please seek your own legal advice if you have concerns.

## Action-Based Conversations: Facilitator’s Guide to Exploring Accomplished Practice in Leadership

**Core Prop 8:** Accomplished educational leaders ensure equitable learning opportunities and high expectations for all. (Standard 5: Culture)

**Title:** Equity and Cultural Responsiveness

**Brief Description:** Educational leaders will explore the essential components of a culturally responsive classroom by developing a common understanding of the basic elements. Leaders will then consider the challenges a teacher needs to overcome to successfully integrate culturally relative practices. Leaders will develop strategies for teachers to foster a culturally responsive classroom.

*“The results of accomplished educational leadership elevate our civic engagement, our economic resilience, and our commitment to our democratic ideals. Ultimately, the quality of life improves as people respectfully contribute and honor the contributions of others. Meeting the challenges of American democracy and global leadership requires a highly educated populace and thus the need for excellent schools led by accomplished principals. Accomplished principals create the conditions upon which these democratic ideals flourish.”*

~National Board Principal Standards, pg. 13

**Protocols Included:** Community circle, small group, whole group discussion, observation, note taking, Newspaper protocol, presentation

| Objectives                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Develop a common understanding of what elements are represented in a culturally responsive classroom.                                            |
| Identify challenges to support a teachers classroom environment in which students have equal access to curriculum.                               |
| Create strategies to improve the classroom environment so students will be better able to cope with failure and be more comfortable taking risks |

**Length/Timing:** 90 Minutes

**Materials or Special Set-up Required:**

*Before Conversation:* Read article listed below: Create Success! *by Kadhira Rajagopal*  
[Table of Contents](#)   [Chapter 1. Culturally Responsive Instruction](#)

| Process:                                                                                                                                                     | Notes   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Quiet read <a href="#">Standard 5</a><br>Using highlighters mark one thing that surprises you; one thing you agree with, and one thing that makes you wonder | ~ 5 min |



# Accomplished Leadership Series

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| <p>Review <a href="#">four agreements of courageous conversations</a> handout: stay engaged; expect to experience discomfort; speak your truth; and expect and accept a lack of closure.<br/>Write Norms on large post it; whole group discussion<br/>Address any misconceptions</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | ~5 Min  |
| <p>Review the sequence of events in a circle in the <a href="#">“Teaching Restorative Practices With Classroom Circles”</a> text. <a href="#">This is located on page 19-20.</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introduce community circle</li> <li>● Form a circle as a group</li> <li>● Introduce the talking piece</li> </ul> <p>State your name and write a value on a paper plate. Place the paper plate in the middle of the circle.</p> <p>Read:<br/>Leaders honor the culture of the students, adults and larger community, demonstrating respect for diversity and ensuring equity. Leaders create and maintain a trusting, safe environment that promotes effective adult practice and student learning.</p> <p>Discuss:<br/>1) What does this mean to you?<br/>2) Do you remember a time when you saw an example of culturally responsive teaching in the classroom? Please explain the who, what, where, when, why and how?<br/>3) State “ONE” word that represented how the lesson made you feel.</p> | ~30 min |
| <p>Read commentary and view Atlas Video Analysis<br/>While viewing the video write on post it notes where elements of cultural responsiveness were present.</p> <p>Add Atlas Video Link</p> <p>Use post it notes and observations from the video to have a whole group discussion around Pedro Noguera’s quote.</p> <p>Support the quote Discussion<br/><i>We must teach the way students learn, rather than expecting them to learn the way we teach.</i><br/>—Pedro Noguera</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | ~20 min |
| <p>Have each group of 3-4 people use evidence from the National Board Accomplished Principal Standard 8, PSEL, recommended readings and conversations around what a culturally responsive classroom looks like and what Leaders need to do to help foster that environment. Use the Key Points and evidence from the readings to guide the creation of the newspaper (USE CHART PAPER)</p> <p>Using the Key points below, design a Newspaper as a 3-4 person group</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Title</li> <li>2) Main Story</li> <li>3) Secondary Story</li> <li>4) Headlines</li> <li>5) Strategies</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | ~25 min |



# Accomplished Leadership Series

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6) Advertisement                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Key Points</b>                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Relationships                                                                                                             | <p><b>Learn</b> about your students' individual cultures.</p> <p><b>Adapt</b> your teaching to the way your students learn.</p> <p><b>Develop</b> a connection with the most challenging students.</p>                                                                                                           |
| Curriculum                                                                                                                | <p><b>Teach</b> in a way students can understand.</p> <p><b>Use</b> student-centered stories, vocabulary, and examples.</p> <p><b>Incorporate</b> relatable aspects of students' lives.</p>                                                                                                                      |
| Delivery                                                                                                                  | <p><b>Establish</b> an interactive dialogue to engage all students.</p> <p><b>Stay</b> within your comfort zone and don't come off as "fake."</p> <p><b>Continually interact</b> with students and provide frequent feedback.</p> <p><b>Use</b> frequent questioning as a vehicle to keep students involved.</p> |
| <b>Exit Ticket:</b>                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Record one action step you as leader can take to create a more culturally responsive classroom environment.               | ~5 min                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| As an exit ticket facilitate a Gallery Walk for the staff to develop a take away                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Reflection:</b> What is one question you still have about creating a culturally responsive environment in your school? | ~5 min                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

### Source(s):

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/nov16/vol74/num03/Unconscious-Bias@-When-Good-Intentions-Aren't-Enough.asp>

### Connections and Extensions:

Three Tips to Make Any Lesson More Culturally Responsive by Zarretta Hammond  
<https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/culturally-responsive-teaching-strategies/>

**Activity documented by:** Philip Weinman, NBCT; Engagement Supervisor, Schenectady High School



# Accomplished Leadership Series

## Elevating the Profession through Leadership: A New Professional Learning Series

LOCATION: DATE

NATIONAL BOARD  
OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS

National Board Core Propositions  
for Accomplished Educational Leaders™

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### Agenda:

- Revisiting the Norms
- Quiet Read: Standard 5
- 4 Agreements of Courageous Conversation
- Community Circle
- Reviewing Video
- Newspaper Writers
- Gallery Walk



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**Purpose:** This series is designed for building leaders. This professional learning opportunity will provide rich, deep, collaborative action-based conversations to allow the personal and professional exploration of accomplished practice in leadership.



**Essential Questions:**

- What does accomplished leadership look like and sound like, in your building, with your population?
- What is the vision? How is it communicated?
- How is student and adult learning managed and monitored?
- How are collaborative partnerships built with families, stakeholders, and communities?

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## Revisiting Our Norms



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### Norms:

- **Equity:** Mind your own airtime. Speak up or scale back as needed.
- **Respect:** Assume the best of intentions. Seek to understand. Then strive to be understood.
- **Community:** Be vulnerable and authentic. Take risks. **Collaborate.** Trust that the wisdom is within the room.
- **Growth:** Own your own learning. Challenge each other **and yourself.** Provide processing time for this complex work.
- **Results:** Stay grounded in the task. Maintain focus with high engagement and low technology. Take necessary moments outside the room. Maintain a parking lot, and always identify next steps.
- *Bring levity!*

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## Quiet Read



Standard 5

Using highlighters mark one thing that surprises you; one thing you agree with, and one thing that makes you wonder

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**4 Agreements**  
of Courageous Conversations

1. Stay Engaged
2. Experience Discomfort
3. Speak Your Truth
4. Expect and Accept Non-Closure



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*Leaders honor the culture of the students, adults and larger community, demonstrating respect for diversity and ensuring equity. Leaders create and maintain a trusting, safe environment that promotes effective adult practice and student learning.*




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**Community Circle**

*Leaders honor the culture of the students, adults and larger community, demonstrating respect for diversity and ensuring equity. Leaders create and maintain a trusting, safe environment that promotes effective adult practice and student learning.*

What does this mean to you?  
Do you remember a time when you saw an example of culturally responsive teaching in the classroom? Please explain the who, what, where, when, why and how?  
State "ONE" word that represented how the lesson made you feel.




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## Seeing it in others

Insert video

Use post it notes and observations from the video to have a whole group discussion around Pedro Noguera's quote.

Support the quote Discussion

*We must teach the way students learn, rather than expecting them to learn the way we teach.*

—Pedro Noguera



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**Reflective Journal**

What is one question you still have about creating a culturally responsive environment in your school?



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**FUTURE DATES:**



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**Facilitators:**

| Name | Email |
|------|-------|
|------|-------|

**Resources:**  
[www.accomplishedteachingny.org](http://www.accomplishedteachingny.org)  
[nbpts.org](http://nbpts.org)



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## Standard V Culture

Accomplished principals inspire and nurture a culture of high expectations, where actions support the common values and beliefs of the organization. These principals build authentic, productive relationships that foster a collaborative spirit. They honor the culture of the students, adults, and larger community, demonstrating respect for diversity and ensuring equity. They create and maintain a trusting, safe environment that promotes effective adult practice and student learning.

Accomplished principals inspire and nurture a culture that is the heart of the learning community. They are passionately committed to creating and leveraging a culture where every student and adult reaches his or her full potential. These principals foster relationships, encouraging each person who participates in the culture to embody the values, attitudes, and behaviors that the organization acts on and celebrates. Accomplished principals understand that collaboration, collegiality, and efficacy permeate an effective culture of high expectations for student learning.

Accomplished principals create and maintain a learning culture that promotes

- high expectations
- collaborative and collegial relationships
- rituals and behaviors that demonstrate common values and beliefs
- respect for cultural differences, diversity, and equity
- a safe and trusting environment

### High Expectations

Accomplished principals build a culture of high expectations for student learning and adult practice. They skillfully shepherd and intentionally navigate all elements of the learning community to develop a collective sense of high expectations, resulting in a high-performing organization where all students learn. These principals lead the creation of a culture that generates excitement, encourages innovation and experimentation, and develops commitment—making continuous improvement and maximum effort the norm. Accomplished principals safeguard a culture that values individuals, strives

for maximum learning for students and adults, and structures a productive and orderly environment.

Accomplished principals lead and model a culture that permeates all facets of the learning organization and extends beyond the campus, inspiring others to get involved. In the learning communities of accomplished principals, the culture is so strong that it is manifested in student behavior on and off campus. For example, if local business owners complain about student behavior, an accomplished principal might empower the students to develop their own code of conduct in collaboration with the business owners.

Accomplished principals nurture a culture that focuses on learning for students, staff, parents, and members of the community at large, one that values all human capital in shaping a learning environment that best suits the needs of all students and stakeholders and the demands of a global society. These principals model entrepreneurship; they access and capitalize on the resources of parents and the community.

Recognizing that culture is the medium through which change is initiated and sustained, accomplished principals skillfully embrace change that complements and advances the culture of the organization. They understand that change for the sake of change is meaningless, adds no value, and will not stand the test of time. When faced with a mandated change, they expertly guide implementation in a way that enhances rather than detracts from the culture.

### **Collaborative and Collegial Relationships**

Accomplished principals foster a culture that emphasizes a collaborative spirit within the learning community. These principals embrace, value, and capitalize on the uniqueness of individuals represented in the learning community. They build and foster positive and productive relationships. These principals work with all stakeholders to create and sustain a positive and caring sense of community that everyone can hear, see, and feel in all interactions. All partners productively engage in creating and sustaining a school with student learning as the focus. There is a strong culture of support for students, where teachers work together to achieve high performance.

Accomplished principals establish trust through teamwork and consensus building. These principals shape and maintain a culture in which adults and students demonstrate personal responsibility. They foster an environment that values effort, persistence, and engagement by all students and staff. High expectations lead to better performance by students, teachers, and everyone else in the learning community.

### **Rituals and Behaviors that Demonstrate Common Values and Beliefs**

In collaboration with adults and students, accomplished principals develop agreed-upon cultural values and norms that are consistent with the vision and mission of the

organization. They expect congruence between the stated values and norms and the actions of the students and adults. These principals form an organizational culture in which adults teach and model the essentials of good character. They unfailingly address individuals who act contrary to the norms by initiating critical conversations designed to maintain a cohesive culture of learning. These principals work with stakeholders to develop a culture that honors the existing and evolving values, beliefs, norms, traditions, and rituals of the learning community. They promote ownership and involvement in all phases of establishing and maintaining such a culture.

Accomplished principals constantly monitor the pulse of the culture. They build systems that incorporate qualitative and quantitative data to monitor and assess the culture, gathering such data through formal and informal means. They use data to initiate critical discussions aimed at enhancing adult practices and student behaviors that are necessary for a trusting, effective culture.

### **Respect for Cultural Differences, Diversity, and Equity**

Accomplished principals collaboratively establish and implement policies, systems, and procedures that promote respect for diverse cultures, ethnicities, and lifestyles, including under-represented segments of the learning community. They engage all members of the learning community in processes that identify values and behaviors related to eliminating bias, intolerance, and inequity. Within established policy, these principals build and maintain a culture that fosters a free exchange of ideas and opinions without fear of retribution.

Accomplished principals respect the cultural differences in a global society and make diversity a means for enriching the culture of the learning community. They work to establish a culture in which students find relevancy and are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to succeed. In the learning communities of accomplished principals, diversity is celebrated as a strength and as a tool for learning and growing. Accomplished principals analyze and monitor classroom activities and assignments for cultural sensitivity and relevance. Accomplished principals respect elements of student culture that support and are relevant to the learning environment. For example, they recognize that students may use multiple forms of technology for building relationships, communicating, and learning. These principals encourage taking responsibility and provide opportunities for bridging the differences among students' culture, parents' culture, and staff members' culture for the betterment of the learning environment.

Accomplished principals understand that all students need role models and advocates with whom they can relate. When some groups are not represented by the staff, for example, these principals reach out into the community to find volunteers to fill this need.



## STANDARD 3. EQUITY AND CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

**Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote *each* student’s academic success and well-being.**

*Effective leaders:*

- a) Ensure that each student is treated fairly, respectfully, and with an understanding of each student’s culture and context.
- b) Recognize, respect, and employ each student’s strengths, diversity, and culture as assets for teaching and learning.
- c) Ensure that each student has equitable access to effective teachers, learning opportunities, academic and social support, and other resources necessary for success.
- d) Develop student policies and address student misconduct in a positive, fair, and unbiased manner.
- e) Confront and alter institutional biases of student marginalization, deficit-based schooling, and low expectations associated with race, class, culture and language, gender and sexual orientation, and disability or special status.
- f) Promote the preparation of students to live productively in and contribute to the diverse cultural contexts of a global society.
- g) Act with cultural competence and responsiveness in their interactions, decision making, and practice.
- h) Address matters of equity and cultural responsiveness in all aspects of leadership.

## ELA AYA #198

InTASC.2d Learners' experiences and culture attended to in content discussions 

*The teacher brings multiple perspectives to the discussion of content, including attention to learners' personal, family, and community experiences and cultural norms.*

**Hide Definition**

**Examples:**

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During the Socratic seminar the teacher forces the students to think. She interjects with deeper questioning which allows students to connect learning to their own personal experiences and challenge societal norms.

**Watch 05:07 - 06:21**

**Watch 07:50 - 12:09**

YouTube [Video Link](#)

Instructional Context

There are 6 seniors and 25 juniors between the ages of 16-18 in my Advanced Placement (AP) English Language and Composition class. In my class, 24 students are Hispanic, 6 students are African American, and 1 student is Caucasian. Most of my Hispanic students speak Spanish at home. Even though most of my Hispanic students are no longer designated as English Language Learners (ELL), many of them have stronger verbal than written language skills. Regardless of their background, almost all of my students struggle with grammar. At our school, 80% of our student population is socioeconomically disadvantaged.

At the beginning of the year, students take a diagnostic assessment that is administered in our district to gauge students' level of proficiency on the state English Language Arts (ELA) standards. Out of the students in this class, 16% were at the advanced level, 55% were at the proficient level, and 8% were at the basic level. By the 11th and 12th grades, students who are taking AP English are generally tracked into higher level classes. My students are very motivated about being competitive applicants to four year colleges, but their literacy skills are still lacking. I want to encourage my students to take an AP course to experience college level work, but they struggle with reading comprehension and writing at the AP level, especially on timed-write essay exams.

Our school is on a block schedule, so I see students for one 45 minute class and two 95 minute classes during the week. For this lesson, I thought it would be most effective to plan it during a 95 minute period. With 31 students, I anticipated that the whole class discussion would require a lot of time so that every student could have the opportunity to participate throughout the Socratic seminar. I approximated 45 to 60 minutes of discussion so that students could earn enough participation points. Since the physical classroom space is also very long and narrow, I tried to seat students facing toward the middle of a wide circle. I want students to be able to make eye contact and hear each other's comments.

### Planning

The long term goals for my students are to craft a complex thesis and support their arguments with evidence in both literary analysis and persuasive essays. These are appropriate goals in an AP Language course because students need to judge the validity of any argument or message that is being communicated in different genres of non-fiction and fiction texts. I want to give students the skills to think analytically, articulate their ideas, and support their arguments with concrete examples. Therefore, I try to incorporate these skills in every summative assessment that is given throughout the year. The fiction and non-fiction reading assignments during this unit are thematically connected to the essential question. Civil disobedience is a major theme that is studied in this unit. The essential question that students must examine is, "How effective are citizens in persuading others to action?" One of the enduring understandings students explore is the role of the government and the extent to which citizens should comply with unjust laws. These are issues students will encounter as members of our society, and they must be able to evaluate unjust situations and make decisions about how they choose to react. All eleventh grade students are currently taking a US History course that the seniors already took last year. Some of the themes from this unit about civil disobedience overlap with the history teacher's content area standards. To support interdisciplinary learning, students are given the option of including an example of a current or historical event that helps prove the thesis in their essay.

The instructional goal for this particular lesson is to prepare students for an in-class timed-write essay by synthesizing multiple texts and making text connections to develop a complex argument. Students have to demonstrate mastery of persuasive writing skills, but they struggle with making sophisticated text-to-text and text-to-world connections to prove their thesis. The essay question is modeled after an AP argumentative prompt and asks, "To what extent should citizens comply with unfair laws created by the government?" The Socratic seminar format is an effective scaffold for students to synthesize the texts. It is helpful for them to talk about ideas that prepare them for this essay question because they can draw from a broad range of examples. This whole-class interaction is very student centered because participants engage each other by asking higher order thinking questions and listen to each other brainstorm for the essay. Most of my students often have surface level ideas, and they struggle to form complex arguments. By having a whole class discussion, students get the chance to evaluate their own opinions before responding to such an open-ended question.

### Analysis

This class shown in the video has a lot of energy and most of my students are verbal learners. A majority of the students thrive on student-centered activities that require them to take leadership. While more vocal students are excited about leading the group in discussion, I need to push my quieter students to speak up and participate. Some of my quieter students have stronger literacy

skills, so the Socratic seminar format allows their peers to learn from them. This is a challenge for me because I need to balance the varying instructional and social needs of my students. Before we begin, students complete a self-evaluation form and set personal goals about their participation. It is important to me that students monitor themselves and reflect on their performance before and after the lesson. This is essential because students can get overwhelmed by the open forum format. Students are not expected to raise their hands and be called on by the teacher. They need to know how to speak up and when to involve others. Some of my quieter students had a goal of "speaking at least two or three times" and "extending on another's comment."

While more vocal students can share with ease, I foster participation from quieter students by referring to these goals at the 11:30 minute mark of the video segment. I build off of a student's comments when I notice that the group is losing focus of the essential question. I ask, "To what extent should they comply with the law? Do you use violence? How far do you go to show your protest?" Immediately, this generates a lot of comments from the class. Because many students speak up simultaneously, no one is listening to each other.

At this point, it is necessary to redirect students to the goals they set at the beginning of this lesson. I elicit participation when I say, "Let's hear from people we haven't heard from. I want you to go back and think about the goals that you set. I'm hoping, those of you that are a little quieter in our discussion...chase goals that push you to speak up. Let's hear from a few folks we haven't heard from yet and share the air time." By circulating the room and checking students' goals before starting the discussion, I knew that Jesus, the boy in the glasses, wanted to share a text-to-world example today. I chose to call on him specifically and give him the opportunity to speak up. He builds on another student's previous example about the Dream Act. It was important to give him an opportunity to participate because Jesus has a lot of ideas, but does not speak up much on his own.

To foster an engaging whole-class discussion, I review norms for the Socratic seminar with my students on a power point. It outlines directions, expectations for behaviors, and grading criteria. I use resources like Bloom's taxonomy and model sample questions that build on the essay prompt and essential questions. Students prepare open-ended questions that foster discussion beforehand to ensure that more rigorous questions are asked. I project the essay prompt and essential questions for the unit in the front of my room as a reference point for our discussion. There are 31 students in the class, and even with clear norms and goal setting, it is easy for them to skirt the essay question. At 4:00 minutes, Julian, the boy in the orange beanie, asks the class, "Do you think you need that person, the one behind the scenes...and then the person doing the stuff? Or do you need people who are in action to rebel?" Shaneeka, Patrick, Kelly, Dora, Tannia, and Danny all respond with summaries about the characters in Fahrenheit 451 (their voices are heard in the video, but they are not focused on).

At 5:30, I thought it was necessary to redirect the conversation from the summary of the novel to the actual essay question that was projected on the front board. I ask students to look at the essay question, but then I begin to break it down for them by having them consider, "Who should be the one to act out...and lead...to go against the government?" I invite them to consider any types of current or historical events when people were able to impact change. This allows students to respond with a variety of examples regardless of their ability to comprehend the assigned readings. Because my students have a wide range of literacy skills, it is important for me to find ways of including students in the discussion, even if they struggle with grade level texts.

A Socratic seminar is a very student-centered activity that is accessible for all students because it allows room for multiple points of view. To ensure fairness and equity with students who have strong opinions, I emphasize clear expectations for positive student behaviors when reviewing the norms, students' goals, and the scoring guide. Students choose the highest number of points when they display negative behaviors such as "personal attacks". This keeps students accountable for being respectful of each other and of the process when they have contradictory opinions. This is particularly important during a whole-class discussion because everyone is participating at once. Also, it is difficult for me to guide the conversation and manage behavior at the same time.

An example of this is seen in the video at 1:30 when Alex and Kelly respond to a question I ask about what motivates people to change and take action. Alex, the boy with his back to the camera, adds onto another student's point when he says, "Another person who chose not to go through the turning point is Beatty...because he saw he was not going to gain anything..." Kelly, the girl with the white head band, disagrees with Alex by asking, "But do you think also because he has all of that knowledge, he wants to use it to have power?" Kelly often earns points for positive behaviors such as "recognizing contradictions" and "making connections" during Socratic seminars, but that also means she may have conflicting opinions from her peers. Alex shows his respect for his classmate and the norms when he says, "No, I don't think that it's because he wants power, he's seen the bad side of things..." They never make personal attacks, but they challenge each other's ideas instead.

This pushes them to delve deeper into the text, rather than focusing on the difference of opinions. It also results in a higher number of students joining in the conversation. Kelly challenges his response again, but because of the norms and the scoring guide, Alex is also mindful of letting others express their opinions and join the conversation since "dominating" is a negative behavior. Setting clear expectations and sharing the scoring criteria is a way to ensure fairness, equity, and access because it allows me to help students monitor their behavior to ensure a respectful whole-class discussion. Facilitating a safe environment allows students like Kelly to take risks with their ideas.

This Socratic seminar was in preparation for an argumentative timed-write essay exam about civil disobedience. Students were assigned Ray Bradbury's novel, *Fahrenheit 451*, and two supplemental readings materials for today's lesson: 1) Kurt Vonnegut's short story, "Harrison Bergeron," and 2) Henry David Thoreau's essay, "Resistance to Civil Government". There were strong thematic connections between all three texts that students would be required to synthesize in their upcoming essay exam. This was an opportunity to explore their ideas and refine their opinions before the essay. These texts foster opportunities for students to make text-to-world connections and build on their prior knowledge since this is a weakness I had identified in their essays early on in the year.

Another important resource used during this lesson is the self-evaluation sheet and scoring guide that helps monitor students' performance. The "Socratic Seminar Scoring Guide" allows me to set clear norms on the power point and evaluate student performance throughout the lesson. Afterward, I can give students immediate feedback on their strengths and weaknesses. This is an essential assessment tool that explicitly states what is expected of my students. Positive behaviors such as "making inferences" and "referring to the text" and "involving others" earn them a high number of points (4). Negative behaviors such as "personal attacks" and "distracting others" are discouraged by taking away the highest number of points (5). Students often want to know if they improved from the last discussion and what their grade is immediately after the discussion. I also write down comments directed at specific students and the class in general in order to give them quantitative and qualitative feedback.

When we started this unit, students participated in an anticipatory activity called Around the World. Students respond to open ended questions to preview the thematic ideas from this unit in small groups. The essay question referenced in this Socratic seminar was one of the questions they discussed. Throughout the unit, students had to complete reading response journal entries for Fahrenheit 451 to practice making text connections. Before this lesson, students had already written a multi-draft literary analysis essay on Fahrenheit 451. They were required to incorporate this text as one of their examples in the argumentative timed-write essay exam. I also had students analyze key quotes from "Resistance to Civil Government" and analyze "Harrison Bergeron" in cooperative learning groups prior to this lesson. Because some of my students still struggle with comprehending grade level appropriate texts, I knew they would benefit from the scaffolding.

After the lesson, students were given a short lesson on the sentence structure. Many of my students are former English Language Learners, but they still struggle with grammar. They often construct their thesis statements as simple sentences. When they write complex or compound sentences, they make many grammatical errors. Because they were synthesizing multiple texts, I wanted to push them to include more complex ideas in their thesis. Therefore, I needed to teach a mini-grammar lesson to scaffold this skill for them. Students wrote sample thesis statements using a different prompt for practice and got verbal feedback from me during class. The following class session, students completed the argumentative timed-write essay exam they were preparing for in this lesson.

This lesson effectively integrates reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Students are required to practice reading comprehension and annotation strategies when reading fiction and non-fiction texts throughout the unit and this particular lesson. Additionally, they had to write questions and take notes on the reading in order to help them participate in the discussion. Lastly, they were constantly listening or speaking during the Socratic seminar. The scoring guide encourages students to integrate all of these skills by rewarding them for behaviors such as "giving an opinion," "making inferences," "referring to the text," and "asking thoughtful questions". In order for students to participate and be successful in this lesson, they had to demonstrate mastery in all four ELA strands.

### Reflection

I was able to achieve the goal of this lesson by guiding students beyond the vague examples and cliché sayings they often cite in discussions and essays. Although students had weak examples during the first 10 minutes of the lesson, their progress toward mastery of the lesson's goal is demonstrated in the video-taped segment as I push them to make stronger text connections. An example of this is seen with Omar, the boy in the blue sweater. At 6:30, Omar has an opinion about an injustice and how people should react, but again, he has no specific examples to support this thought. This is characteristic of a "4" on the AP rubric because the evidence is "insufficient." Without improving his evidence, Omar, like many other students in my class, will be unable to get a passing score on the AP rubric.

I keep facilitating opportunities for students to make strong text-to-world connections, and after another student models a specific reference to slavery and abolitionists, at 9:00, Omar says, "I want to connect what you said to the mental slavery that is going on right now... the Dream Act recently didn't pass..." He does a better job connecting his ideas to a specific legislation he found unjust, making his example closer to a "6" because the "evidence is appropriate". Jesus, the boy with the glasses, adds to the conversation by referring to the actions of Martin Luther King Jr. during the civil

rights movement. Stephanie, the girl sitting next to me, cites an example about Harvey Milk's fight for equality. Their responses are also "appropriate" according to the AP rubric and would help them earn a passing score. The growth seen in these particular students, as well as their peers in general, reflects the type of achievement I want to see during the lesson. Students are able to generate specific examples by interacting with each other in thoughtful discussion that will hopefully result in a higher AP essay score.

A successful moment of the video recording occurs when Julian, the boy in the orange hat, makes a strong text-to-text connection during the Socratic seminar. In general, Julian does well with taking a position on an argument, but really struggles with generating his own examples in class timed-write essay exams. He gets frustrated and usually stops writing because he does not have any examples to support his opinion. When this happens, he usually resorts to regurgitating cliché ideas. Julian finally moved away from surface level examples and connects the essay question to civil disobedience, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, and the work of abolitionists (9:00). He comments, "Abolitionists in the North really felt the need that slavery needed to be abolished... Abolitionists who weren't even affected by slavery that wanted them to be set free..." He was connecting what he read in Douglass's autobiography to the idea that citizens should take action to advocate for others even if they are not the ones being oppressed by unfair laws. He analyzes the abolitionists' motivation to participate in civil disobedience. Following this discussion, this was Julian's best examples that he discussed in his timed-write essay. Not only that, but three other students were able to effectively build on his observation because he modeled how to make a perceptive comment.

When given the opportunity to conduct another whole class discussion using the Socratic seminar format, I would have students prepare their thesis statements for the essay prompt beforehand, rather than afterward. This way, all students would come in with a strong opinion already formed. This might affect the pace of the discussion and allow students to take notes on the examples that help support their thesis statements. Also, I would call on my quiet, but higher level students earlier in the discussion. I waited half way through the discussion to let them take initiative and participate because I knew many of these students set this as a goal for themselves on the self-reflection. However, if I had called on them sooner, they could have modeled sophisticated text connections and offered insights for the weaker students to build on. We might have been able to avoid some of the vague references and immediately focus on synthesizing the texts and create good examples for their essay.

Also, next time, I will remind students during the discussion that they need to involve others who are not actively participating by directing a question or comment toward them. By having students be the ones to engage their peers, we can maintain the student-centered focus of the Socratic seminar and promote positive interactions. This lesson's outcome influenced future instruction of this class by revealing the need to increase participation from my higher level students at the start of the Socratic seminar. They often shy away from leadership roles in class, and I would like to conference with them on an individual basis to encourage them to take initiative in class activities.

Students are quick to respond to argumentative essay questions with their opinions, allowing them to take a clear stand in their thesis statements. However, this lesson confirmed that most students still need more practice activating their prior knowledge. I need to design more activities that allow students to draw from text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections to support the opinions expressed in their thesis statements. These lessons can either be verbal or written activities

because students will benefit from both. I will continue to facilitate learning opportunities that increase students' cultural literacy to help them develop a mature academic perspective.

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## Chapter 1. Culturally Responsive Instruction

The CREATE model asks teachers to provide culturally responsive instruction for their students. Culturally responsive (or relevant) teaching has been described as "a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 382). What does this mean? It means that teachers make standards-based content and curricula accessible to students and teach in a way that students can understand. To do this, teachers must incorporate relatable aspects of students' daily lives into the curriculum. Such familiar aspects include language (which may include jargon or slang), prior knowledge, and extracurricular interests such as music and sports. Once students feel comfortable with how a teacher talks and discusses academic material, they will feel comfortable enough to focus and try to learn the content.

A common misconception about culturally responsive instruction is that teachers must teach the "Asian way" or the "black way." People often get intimidated by the words *culturally responsive* because of the incredible number of cultures and mixes of cultures in today's classrooms. Too often, teachers subscribe to the misguided idea that students of different races need to be taught differently, and they waste an enormous amount of effort in the process. Another result is that teachers usually appear fake by simply trying too hard to impress students of different backgrounds.

The key point here is that we don't need a different teaching method or curriculum for students based on race. I teach the entire class in a way that all of my students can relate to and understand, using aspects of their cultures with which I am comfortable. I don't want to stray too far from my comfort zone and consequently appear fake to the students I'm trying to engage. For example, I like to incorporate hip hop music into my lessons because many of my students relate to this style of music and I am also comfortable with it.

Hip hop is something my students (and many students) relate to and understand. You don't have to be African American, Latino, or from any particular cultural background to listen to a specific type of music or like a specific musician. When I teach complicated mathematical concepts, I tend to make analogies to cars, animals, sports, or other topics that will pique student interest. I try to capture their attention and find interests that are common to as many kids as possible. I don't teach by race. I teach to their collective culture. I find what appeals to most of my students—that I am also comfortable using—and then exploit these commonalities. Any teacher can do this. Any teacher of any race or gender has something in common with or can find something that relates to most of his or her students. Remember, though: Put it in their language, but don't come off as fake.

According to Crystal Kuykendall, a former executive director of the National Alliance of Black School Educators, "culture determines how children perceive life and their relationship to the world. Because culture also influences how and what children learn, educators can use culture to improve self-image and achievement. Not only must teachers show an appreciation of cultural diversity, they must also incorporate teaching strategies that are congruent with the learning styles of their students" (1989, pp. 32–33).

## Culturally Responsive Relationships

This has been repeatedly confirmed; if educators do not have some knowledge of their students' lives outside of paper-and-pencil work, and even outside of their classrooms, then they cannot accurately know their students' strengths and weaknesses (Delpit, 1995). This theme is also echoed by Pedro Noguera, who concludes that, in order to engage urban students, teachers must adapt their teaching to the way in which those students learn rather than the reverse (expecting students to adapt their learning to the way in which they are taught). Therefore, teachers need to know how to make ideas and knowledge meaningful to urban students and how to use students' culture and interests as tools to teach them (Noguera, 2003).

The CREATE model requires that teachers make a concerted effort to learn about their students' individual cultures and interests: language, sports, music, and so on. To achieve this, consider using surveys and questionnaires, or build relationships by informally talking to students and asking about their interests.

We must teach the way students learn, rather than expecting them to learn the way we teach.

—Pedro Noguera

During the first week of school, I begin building relationships with my students by using surveys and questionnaires to learn about some of their interests, I make time to talk with each of them, and I encourage them to share information about themselves. I have my students describe what a "good teacher" does in the classroom, and I then ask them to tell me what I can do to be the best teacher for them. Finally, I encourage them to share their negative experiences with previous math classes and give me ideas about how they would like to be taught.

As a result of talking to students and learning about their individual needs, I successfully convince them that I am an ally and willing to listen to them on their own level. This communication tends to make students feel hopeful because they recognize that their teacher is willing to adapt his or her teaching to

their needs. I make an assertive effort to talk to students with a history of failure, behavioral challenges, or suspensions from other teachers' classrooms, as well as to students at risk for future failure.

We must keep in mind that education, at its best, hones and develops the knowledge and skills each student already possesses, while at the same time adding new knowledge and skills to that base.

—Lisa Delpit

Early in the school year, I make sure to develop a connection with the most challenging students and gain a clear understanding of what may cause them to lose interest or emotional stability in the classroom. During the first few weeks, I strive to learn about all of my students, but I focus on the most challenging students so I can develop positive relationships with them and adapt the curriculum and my instruction to their way of learning. Usually, the most challenging students develop into the best leaders in my class—if I can engage them, I am usually able to engage the rest of the class.

## Culturally Responsive Curriculum

After teachers have gained an understanding of where students come from, they can incorporate learning styles, culture, background, prior knowledge, vocabulary, music, and sports into the curriculum. Keep in mind that the CREATE model does not ask teachers to *replace* the mandatory standards-based curriculum. Instead, it asks the teacher to *integrate* the traditional curriculum with material that is relevant to students' lives. Urban educators must question their teaching practices and develop culturally relevant teaching strategies to hook their students. To this end, teachers must use the cultural capital available in their classrooms to capture attentions, engage students, and make the academic curriculum relevant. The goal is for students to have increased access to the standards-based content they will need to take and pass district and national tests.

Students must be ... allowed the resource of the teacher's expert knowledge, while being helped to acknowledge their own 'expertness' as well.

—Lisa Delpit

In his book *The School and Society*, educational philosopher John Dewey argued that the development of curricula should be based on students' own interests (Dewey, 1889). Education, he felt, should be a child-centered process. Dewey believed strongly in connecting curriculum to the interests and activities of students. He felt that effective education required teachers to use students' interests to guide them toward an understanding of the sciences, history, and the arts. Dewey also urged teachers to connect each

child's life experiences and interests to the existing curriculum. As a result, students would be able to understand and succeed in the traditional curriculum.

Dewey's philosophy has contemporary echoes as well. Robert Moses is a civil rights activist and founder of the Algebra Project, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to raising the academic performance of every child in America, a cause Moses describes as a modern-day civil right for minorities. One of the underlying principles of the Algebra Project is that "people talk" is used to relate math concepts to students. This principle implies that mathematical concepts in general, and algebra in particular, are discussed in language that is natural and intuitive for students before those students are exposed to the technical terms found in textbooks. Analysis of schools using the Algebra Project has shown improvement in test scores; supporters, however, point to the more important result: the perception that inner-city kids are neither interested nor proficient in math has been effectively shot down (Cobb & Moses, 2001).

In my own classroom, I am culturally responsive because I teach in a way that every student can understand. I use student-centered stories, vocabulary, and language. Student-centered stories and language are critical to hooking students' attention and making them receptive to learning the curriculum and textbook vocabulary. I constantly try to find ways to infuse hip hop, sports, and other student interests *without seeming fake*. It is important that you connect to your students, but it is even more important to be sincere and be yourself. Students have an innate ability to know when you're not being yourself.

For example, I use "street language" to explain the concept of isolating the variable in algebra. I say to students, " $X$  is like a dog that wants his own block or neighborhood. Solving for  $X$  implies that it must be alone in its own neighborhood.  $X$ 's neighborhood is separated from the other neighborhood by the equals sign, which acts as a gate. So there are two different neighborhoods. Any number on  $X$ 's block is like an enemy. In order for the number to leave  $X$ 's block, it must change its operation when it crosses the equals sign (or gate). Therefore, if the problem is  $X + 4 = 6$ , then the positive 4 must leave the block and become a negative 4.  $6 - 4$  is 2, so  $X = 2$ , and  $X$  is alone. The goal of solving for  $X$  is to get  $X$  (or the dog) alone."

Student-centered vocabulary and language are keys to hooking students' attention and ensuring that they will be receptive enough to learn the curriculum and textbook vocabulary. Try to find ways to infuse hip hop, sports, and other student interests *without seeming fake*. Make honest connections, but be sincere and be yourself.

Once students understand the story and the concept of isolating the  $X$ , I go back and teach the academic vocabulary. At this point,  $X$  becomes a *variable*. The students are more prepared and willing to learn because they already have a sense of confidence that comes from an increased level of comfort with the material.

Let's consider another example of culturally responsive teaching. English teachers can use a variety of methods to teach similes, including examples with familiar sports stars and relatable situations that involve similes and metaphors. For instance, "Kobe flies like an eagle to the basket, and the crowd is

frozen in anticipation." It's also possible to use hip hop lyrics to teach literary elements, such as theme and tone. Many lyrics easily lend themselves to interesting and engaging lessons on mood or character analysis. Once the teacher hooks students' attention and makes sure they understand the relevant concept, he or she can then incorporate the standard textbook, which may include more traditional literature by Shakespeare, Faulkner, or Salinger. Students will likely be more willing to analyze a Shakespearean conflict if they already understand the concept from exposure to lessons that dealt with hip hop or stories that directly relate to their lives.

Within the confines of standard textbooks, teachers can often find multiple opportunities to connect a theme with their students' lives. For example, there are many Shakespearean themes—such as jealousy and greed—that students can easily relate to if the connection is made clear. The tension between the Montague and Capulet families in *Romeo and Juliet* is similar to the tension that might arise if two lovers belonged to rival gangs or came from different cultures. Though it is an unfortunate situation, students in many urban settings can relate to the tensions that often lead to violence because of animosity between gang "families." Examples that build on experiences and situations such as this will usually get the attention of students in inner-city environments.

### **Solving for X (In a Culturally Responsive Classroom)**

$$X + 4 = 10$$

$$X (+ 4) = 10 (- 4)$$

$$X = 6$$

The left side of this equation is *X*'s neighborhood. *X* is the top dog in his 'hood and doesn't like anyone else on his turf. Solving for *X* implies that *X* must be alone in its own neighborhood. When a number leaves the *X* dog's block, it must change its operation. A positive number will become a negative number, for example.

### **Creating Similies (In a Culturally Responsive Classroom)**

The crowd fell silent and was frozen in anticipation. Kobe Bryant soared *like a bird* over the court. *Like an eagle*, he flew over LeBron James and dunked the ball. The basket was a big nest, and nothing could stop him.

Relevant vocabulary will hook students' attention so they can eventually learn and understand academic vocabulary, the textbook, and the real world. Grab students' attention with their own language and stories before presenting academic language. Each population is different, though, and it would be a mistake for

teachers to assume that *all* urban kids relate to gangs, basketball, or hip hop. The key here is that each teacher makes an effort to learn more about his or her students, puts himself or herself in their shoes, and figures out what it takes to make learning more accessible.

Be creative! Teach in a way that relates familiar experiences to your students, and make the learning process as easy for them as possible. The textbook is just one resource (of many) you can use to achieve this end.

## Culturally Responsive Delivery

Another aspect of culturally responsive instruction that has been effective in urban schools concerns the delivery of instruction to students. Though it is critical to make the curriculum accessible and relevant to students, it is also important that the content be delivered in an engaging and interesting way. All too often, a teacher has a brilliant idea or lesson, but the delivery is so boring or didactic that students get turned off and miss out on the experience.

The CREATE model asks teachers in urban classrooms to make a focused effort at establishing an interactive dialogue with students, instead of delivering a one-way lecture. Lectures often cause students to lose interest, and when their interest is lost, students are more prone to act disruptively. Effective teachers use a conversational approach and personally interact with many different students during the lecture portion of the class.

Research has shown that students typically retain the most information during the first 10 minutes of a lecture, so it is important to put limits on the amount of class time consumed by lectures. In fact, a traditional lecture may not improve student understanding at all, since it forces learners into passive roles. In order for learners to process and understand the relevant information, they need to be cast in more active roles within the classroom. Breaking the lecture into smaller chunks, and incorporating group discussions and activities into the curriculum, are ideal ways to accomplish this (League for Innovation in the Community College, 2006).

In urban settings, culturally responsive delivery of instruction requires continual interaction with students and frequent feedback. This highly interactive pedagogy can be conducted in a variety of ways, including question-and-answer techniques—the most powerful method I use to keep my students engaged and involved.

Institutions that are culturally responsive and that systematically affirm, draw on, and use cultural formations of African Americans will produce *exceptional academic results* from African American students.

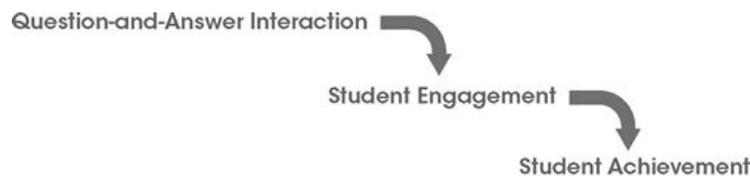
—Theresa Perry

It has long been understood that questions are effective educational tools when asked before, during, and after a learning experience. The question-and-answer instructional style, then, has a significant impact on learning because questions are major vehicles for frequent interaction and academic feedback. One of the major factors that determine the extent of a positive effect and influence on students is the frequency with which teachers pose questions; the most effective teachers ask approximately three times as many questions. Dialogues that comprise question-and-answer exchanges allow for frequent academic interaction and provide numerous opportunities for students to be actively involved and receive immediate feedback. Students also feel an enhanced sense of self-esteem when they receive praise for positive input (Brophy & Good, 1986).

If you lecture us for more than a minute straight, you'll lose us!

**We need to be involved, please!**

Academic discussions driven by question-and-answer exchanges also provide students with opportunities to receive immediate feedback they can use to control for mistakes, correct errors, develop as learners, and benefit from a more efficient learning process (Hannel, 2009). Questions must be specific and goal-oriented, and teachers must continually keep students focused on the established learning goals. Presenting too much information can cause cognitive overload or result in superficial learning. A step-by-step lesson driven by questions and answers provides opportunities for elaborate feedback in digestible chunks that does not become overwhelming or ignored (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999).



**Get personal with your questions: Ask students by name.**

These interactions are especially important for low-achieving students (or those with low self-efficacy) because they allow these students to improve learning and performance through a scaffolding process that encourages a step-by-step approach to problem-solving, allowing teachers to help students build from their existing skill levels (Graesser, McNamara, & VanLehn, 2005). For students new to or unfamiliar with a specific task, this process provides an avenue toward understanding while reducing potential frustration. High-achieving or more motivated students also benefit from the process by receiving feedback that challenges them, such as hints, cues, and prompts.

Create an interactive environment in your classroom with a continuing dialogue and conversation that runs at least two ways. Don't simply call on a few cream-of-the-crop kids whom you are confident will know the answer. Engage as many students as possible, especially the target population!

In the classroom, the CREATE model asks that teachers use questioning as a vehicle to keep students engaged during instruction. Make it a 30-way conversation, where you fire questions at all kids and everyone is in the "hot seat" and involved. In my classes, I ask a question every few seconds and have students teach back the step or concept I just covered. I do not wait for hands to go up voluntarily, and I try to keep everyone involved. By the end of a 15-minute lecture, I will have elicited at least 25 different responses, and I will have rewarded those students with points toward their grades (publically awarded on the whiteboard).

It is important that teachers use interaction that is more personal than general. I especially call on the target population (students who struggle and act out loudly and students who stay "under the radar") because I am aware that they will be the first ones to drift off or get lost. I avoid general questioning and instead call on individual students randomly. If only cream-of-the-crop kids are questioned or volunteer answers, teachers may mistakenly assume that everyone is listening. When a lesson favors students who are more attentive or already know the material, the target population can easily get lost, frustrated, or caught up in daydreaming. Unfortunately, these students won't reveal their confusion or boredom right away. Instead, those feelings will eventually manifest themselves as discipline issues or poor achievement on tests.

As I explain a concept or solve a problem in class, I make sure to ask three or four questions every step or two of the way. I also make a point to call on struggling students more frequently to ensure they are still engaged and following along. This interaction *must* occur logically and personally. For example, I might say, "John, tell me the next step in this problem." After John is done, I immediately call on another student to reiterate the same point or continue to the next step. I choose students to teach back to the class every concept I introduce and every step of a problem. I make every effort to interact with as many students as possible, but I focus my attention on the target population. Therefore, if I ask 10 questions, 7 will be directed toward students in the target population. If they can understand the material and stay engaged, then there is a good chance the rest of the class will also follow along.

In addition to question-and-answer techniques, I occasionally divide the class into teams and have them play math-related games. Playing games not only lightens the atmosphere, but it also helps students collaborate with one another. Even mildly competitive games encourage students to pay attention and be involved. There are many ways to conduct an interactive dialogue with students and keep them actively involved in the learning process. Remember that the key is to maintain an *interactive* lecture and to get personal with your questions.

# Key Points

## Relationships

**Learn** about your students' individual cultures.

**Adapt** your teaching to the way your students learn.

**Develop** a connection with the most challenging students.

## Curriculum

**Teach** in a way students can understand.

**Use** student-centered stories, vocabulary, and examples.

**Incorporate** relatable aspects of students' lives.

## Delivery

**Establish** an interactive dialogue to engage all students.

**Stay** within your comfort zone and don't come off as "fake."

**Continually interact** with students and provide frequent feedback.

**Use** frequent questioning as a vehicle to keep students involved.

Reviewing and agreeing on the principles below can help us have candid discussions about racism with our educational leaders.

- *Assume that, at any given moment in the conversation, the other person is doing the best he or she can.* Chances are, it's true.
- *Forgive yourself and others for making mistakes,* including inexact wording, muddled thinking, or unintended use of stereotypes.
- *Suppress hidden agendas* and the urge to preach or politicize.
- *Remain non accusatory when you see things differently from another.* Use phrases like, "It's been my experience that \_\_\_\_," "Tell me more about\_\_\_\_," or "How did faculty at your last school respond to \_\_\_\_?"
- *Seek first to understand,* then to be understood (Covey, 2013).
- *If you disagree with someone, paraphrase that person's point before responding.* It helps him know that his comments were heard and considered.
- *Avoid language that blames* ("If it weren't for white people. ..." "They're always speaking Spanish together, so they must not want me around." "You're blind to white privilege.") Blaming thwarts honest conversation.
- *Don't ask anyone to speak for a whole race* if there's only one student or colleague in the group from a particular culture or race.
- *Acknowledge that candid conversation makes us all vulnerable.* Teachers' inner selves are on view daily by many constituencies—students, parents, administrators, and the general public. They are also subject to self-doubts and high expectations of professionalism. As a result, they may be hesitant to open those vulnerability gates too widely.
- *Avoid associating the quality of a colleague's teaching with exploratory comments offered in conversation about racism.* A peer can be a neophyte in such conversations, but effective in the classroom.



## A Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching

*Raymond J. Wlodkowski and Margery B. Ginsberg*

**Research has shown that no one teaching strategy will consistently engage all learners. The key is helping students relate lesson content to their own backgrounds.**

To be effective in multicultural classrooms, teachers must relate teaching content to the cultural backgrounds of their students. According to the research, teaching that ignores student norms of behavior and communication provokes student resistance, while teaching that is responsive prompts student involvement (Olneck 1995). There is growing evidence that strong, continual engagement among diverse students requires a holistic approach—that is, an approach where the how, what, and why of teaching are unified and meaningful (Ogbu 1995).

To that end, we have developed a comprehensive model of culturally responsive teaching: a pedagogy that crosses disciplines and cultures to engage learners while respecting their cultural integrity. It accommodates the dynamic mix of race, ethnicity, class, gender, region, religion, and family that contributes to every student's cultural identity. The foundation for this approach lies in theories of intrinsic motivation.

Before we outline our framework for culturally responsive teaching, we will address the bond of motivation and culture, and analyze some of the social and institutional resistance to teaching based on principles of intrinsic motivation. Understanding these relationships provides a clearer view of the challenges we must overcome if we are to genuinely transform teaching and successfully engage all students.

### Motivation Is Inseparable from Culture

Engagement is the visible outcome of motivation, the natural capacity to direct energy in the pursuit of a goal. Our emotions influence our motivation. In turn, our emotions are socialized through culture—the deeply learned confluence of language, beliefs, values, and behaviors that pervades every aspect of our lives. For example, one person working at a task feels frustrated and stops, while another person working at the task feels joy and continues. Yet another person, with an even different set of cultural beliefs, feels frustrated at the task but continues with increased determination. What may elicit that frustration, joy, or

determination may differ across cultures, because cultures differ in their definitions of novelty, hazard, opportunity, and gratification, and in their definitions of appropriate responses. Thus, the response a student has to a learning activity reflects his or her culture.

While the internal logic as to why a student does something may not coincide with that of the teacher, it is, nonetheless, present. And, to be effective, the teacher must understand that perspective. Rather than trying to know *what to do to* students, we must work with students to interpret and deepen their existing knowledge and enthusiasm for learning. From this viewpoint, motivationally effective teaching *is* culturally responsive teaching.

## Locked in Mid-Century

Most educators with whom we have worked would agree that there is a strong relationship between culture and motivation, and that it only makes sense to understand a student's perspective. Why, then, do we have such difficulty acting this way in the classroom?

One major reason is that we feel very little social pressure to act otherwise. The popular media and structural systems of education remain locked in a deterministic, mechanistic, and behavioristic orientation toward human motivation.

If one were to do a content analysis of national news broadcasts and news magazines for the last 40 years to identify the most widely used metaphor for motivation, “the carrot and the stick”—reward and punish, manipulate and control—would prevail. As a result, our national consciousness assumes there are many people who need to be motivated by other people.

The prevailing question, “How do I motivate them?” implies that “they” are somehow dependent, incapable of self-motivation, and in need of help from a more powerful “other.” In this sense, the “at-risk” label acts to heighten our perception of students as motivationally dysfunctional, and increases our tendency not to trust their perspective. The fact that an inordinately high number of “at-risk” students are poor and people of color should cause us to reflect on how well we understand motivation. Thoughtful scholars have suggested that this label now serves as a euphemism for “culturally deprived” (Banks 1993).

Secondary education is influenced a great deal by the practices of higher education, and both levels tend to follow the precepts of extrinsic reinforcement. Teaching and testing practices, competitive assessment procedures, grades, grade point averages, and eligibility for select vocations and colleges form an interrelated system. This system is based on the assumption that human beings will strive to learn when they are externally rewarded for a specific behavior or punished for lack of it.

Schools and colleges successfully educate a disproportionately low number of low-income and ethnic minority students (Wlodkowski and Ginsberg 1995). Because the importance of grades and grade point averages increases as a student advances in school, it is legitimate to question whether extrinsic motivation systems are effective for significant numbers of students across cultures. We can only conclude that, as

long as the educational system continues to relate motivation to learn with external rewards and punishments, culturally different students will, in large part, be excluded from engagement and success in school.

## Changing Consciousness About Motivation

It is part of human nature to be curious, to be active, to initiate thought and behavior, to make meaning from experience, and to be effective at what we value. These primary sources of motivation reside in all of us, across all cultures. When students can see that what they are learning makes sense and is important, their intrinsic motivation emerges.

We can begin to replace the carrot and stick metaphor with the words “understand” and “elicit”; to change the concept of motivation from reward and punishment to communication and respect. We can influence the motivation of students by coming to know their perspective, by drawing forth who they naturally and culturally are, and by seeing them as unique and active. Sharing our resources with theirs, working together, we can create greater energy for learning.

Intrinsic systems of motivation can accommodate cultural differences. Theories of intrinsic motivation have been successfully applied and researched in areas such as cross-cultural studies (Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi 1988); bilingual education (Cummins 1986); and education, work, and sports (Deci and Ryan 1985). Ample documentation across a variety of student and regional settings suggests that noncompetitive, informational evaluation processes are more effective than competitive, controlling evaluation procedures (Deci et al. 1991, Deci and Ryan 1991).

A growing number of educational models, including constructivism and multiple intelligences theory, are based on intrinsic motivation. They see student perspective as central to teaching. Unfortunately, educators must often apply these theories within educational systems dominated by extrinsic reinforcement, where grades and class rank are emphasized. And, when extrinsic rewards continue to be the primary motivators, intrinsic motivation is dampened. Those students whose socialization accommodates the extrinsic approach surge ahead, while those students—often the culturally different—whose socialization does not, fall behind. A holistic, culturally responsive pedagogy based on intrinsic motivation is needed to correct this imbalance.

## An Intrinsic Motivational Framework

We propose a model of culturally responsive teaching based on theories of intrinsic motivation. This model is respectful of different cultures and is capable of creating a common culture that all students can accept. Within this framework, pedagogical alignment—the coordination of approaches to teaching that ensure maximum consistent effect—is critical. The more harmonious the elements of teaching are, the more likely they are to evoke, encourage, and sustain intrinsic motivation.

The framework names four motivational conditions that the teacher and students continuously create or enhance. They are:

1. *Establishing inclusion*—creating a learning atmosphere in which students and teachers feel respected by and connected to one another.
2. *Developing attitude*—creating a favorable disposition toward the learning experience through personal relevance and choice.
3. *Enhancing meaning*—creating challenging, thoughtful learning experiences that include student perspectives and values.
4. *Engendering competence*—creating an understanding that students are effective in learning something they value.

These conditions are essential to developing intrinsic motivation. They are sensitive to cultural differences. They work in concert as they influence students and teachers, and they happen in a moment as well as over a period of time.

## Culturally Responsive Teaching

Let us look at an actual episode of culturally responsive teaching based on this motivational framework. It occurs in an urban high school social science class with a diverse group of students and an experienced teacher.

At the start of a new term, the teacher wants to familiarize students with active research methods. She will use such methods throughout the semester, and she knows from previous experience that many students view research as abstract, irrelevant, and oppressive work.

After reflecting on the framework, her teaching goal, and her repertoire of methods, she randomly assigns students to small groups. She encourages them to discuss any previous experiences they may have had in doing research as well as their expectations and concerns for the course. Each group then shares its experiences, expectations, and concerns as she records them on the chalkboard. In this manner, she is able to understand her students' perspectives and to increase their connection to one another and herself (*motivational condition: establishing inclusion*).

The teacher explains that most people are researchers much of the time, and she asks the students what they would like to research among themselves. After a lively discussion, the class decides to investigate and predict the amount of sleep some members of the class had the previous night. This experience engages student choice, increases the relevance of the activity, and contributes to the favorable disposition emerging in the class (*motivational condition: developing attitude*). The students are learning in a way that includes their experiences and perspectives.

Five students volunteer to serve as subjects, and the other students form research teams. Each team must develop a set of observations and questions to ask the volunteers. (They cannot ask them how many hours

of sleep they had the night before.) After they ask their questions, the teams rank the five volunteers from the most to the least amount of sleep. When the volunteers reveal the amount of time they slept, the students discover that no research team was correct in ranking more than three students.

Students discuss why this outcome may have occurred, and consider questions that might have increased their accuracy, such as, "How many hours of sleep do you need to feel rested?" Collaborative learning, hypothesis testing, critical questioning, and predicting heighten the engagement, challenge, and complexity of this process for the students (*motivational condition: enhancing meaning*).

These procedures encourage and model equitable participation for all students.

After the discussion, the teacher asks the students to write a series of statements about what this activity has taught them about research. Students then break into small groups to exchange their insights.

Self-assessment helps the students to gain, from an authentic experience, an understanding of something they may value (*motivational condition: engendering competence*).

This snapshot of culturally responsive teaching illustrates how the four motivational conditions constantly influence and interact with one another. Without establishing inclusion (small groups to discuss experiences) and developing attitude (students choosing a relevant research), the enhancement of meaning (research teams devising hypotheses) may not have occurred with equal ease and energy; and the self-assessment to engender competence (what students learned from their perspective) may have had a dismal outcome.

According to this model of teaching, all the motivational conditions contribute to student engagement.

## Norms, Procedures, and Structures

Although the above event actually occurred, it may sound like a fairy tale because everything worked smoothly. In reality, teaching situations often become fragmented by the competing needs and interests of a diverse student body. All too often, we use educational norms and procedures that are contradictory. The result is that we confuse students and decrease their intrinsic motivation. For example, consider the teacher who uses cooperative learning yet gives pop quizzes; or who espouses constructivist learning yet grades for participation; or who abhors discrimination yet calls mainly on boys during class discussions.

In an effort to help educators avoid such errors of incoherence, we have compiled educational norms, procedures, and structures that are effective from a motivational as well as multicultural perspective (see fig. 1). Together, they provide an integrated system of teaching practices for our model of culturally responsive teaching. They are categorized according to the motivational conditions of the framework:

*Norms* are the explicit values espoused by the teacher and students. *Procedures* are learning processes that carry out the norms. *Structures* are the rules or binding expectations that support the norms and procedures.

**Figure 1. Four Conditions Necessary for Culturally Responsive Teaching**

### **1. Establish Inclusion**

*Norms:*

Emphasize the human purpose of what is being learned and its relationship to the students' experience.

Share the ownership of knowing with all students.

Collaborate and cooperate. The class assumes a hopeful view of people and their capacity to change.

Treat all students equitably. Invite them to point out behaviors or practices that discriminate.

*Procedures:* Collaborative learning approaches; cooperative learning; writing groups; peer teaching; multi-dimensional sharing; focus groups; and reframing.

*Structures:* Ground rules, learning communities; and cooperative base groups.

### **2. Develop Positive Attitude**

*Norms:*

Relate teaching and learning activities to students' experience or previous knowledge.

Encourage students to make choices in content and assessment methods based on their experiences, values, needs, and strengths.

*Procedures:* Clear learning goals; problem solving goals; fair and clear criteria of evaluation; relevant learning models; learning contracts; approaches based on multiple intelligences theory, pedagogical flexibility based on style, and experiential learning.

*Structure:* Culturally responsive teacher/student/parent conferences.

### 3. Enhance Meaning

*Norms:*

Provide challenging learning experiences involving higher order thinking and critical inquiry.  
Address relevant, real-world issues in an action-oriented manner.  
Encourage discussion of relevant experiences. Incorporate student dialect into classroom dialogue.

*Procedures:* Critical questioning; guided reciprocal peer questioning; posing problems; decision making; investigation of definitions; historical investigations; experimental inquiry; invention; art; simulations; and case study methods.

*Structures:* Projects and the problem-posing model.

### 4. Engender Competence

*Norms:*

Connect the assessment process to the students' world, frames of reference, and values.  
Include multiple ways to represent knowledge and skills and allow for attainment of outcomes at different points in time.  
Encourage self-assessment.

*Procedures:* Feedback; contextualized assessment; authentic assessment tasks; portfolios and process-folios; tests and testing formats critiqued for bias; and self-assessment.

*Structures:* Narrative evaluations; credit/no credit systems; and contracts for grades.

Based on Wlodkowski, R. J., and M. B. Ginsberg. (1995). *Diversity and Motivation: Culturally Responsive Teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Teaching in a way that respects diversity is challenging, of course. Consider the following case example. The *norm* that Mr. Clark, a U.S. history teacher, is aiming for is “sharing the ownership of knowing.” The topic is the notion of cultural pluralism, and, later, the roles that our socioeconomic backgrounds play in our lives. Clark uses the *procedures* of collaborative learning and critical questioning to facilitate student comprehension of the concepts of “melting pot,” “social class,” and other terms.

Clark asks the class to first brainstorm words that are associated with culture. Students volunteer “language,” “ethnicity,” “gender,” “religion,” “food preference,” and so forth. In pairs, students then talk to their partner about ways in which they believe they are culturally similar and distinct from each other. After 15 minutes, the teacher asks students to note three observations about the concept of culture. The most prevalent response is that “we were surprised at how much we have in common.” Clark indicates that he sees this as well. He asks the class, “If we have such commonality, why do some groups of people in the United States have such difficulty becoming economically secure?” Note what happens as students struggle over whose perceptions are the most accurate.

*First student:* Some have more difficulty because of discrimination, because people have prejudices against people whose skin is a different color from theirs.

*Second student:* I don't think it's that simple. Look how many people of color are doing well. We've got generals, mayors, and corporation executives. There's a black middle class and they are economically secure.

*Third student:* Yeah, that might be so, but it isn't as many people as you think. The newspapers just make a big deal about minorities succeeding.

Clark's ground rules (*structure*) for this conversation endorse honesty in offering opinions and forbid putdowns, so the tone of this exchange is respectful. Interest in the topic intensifies as a result of the exchange. Clark acknowledges the different points of view and asks the class: “What questions might provide insights or clarify the differences between these viewpoints?” The class breaks into small groups after which Clark records the suggested questions. Some that emerge:

1. Which ethnic groups are most economically successful? Least successful?
2. What proportion of each ethnic group is lower income, middle income, upper income?
3. Are more people of color economically successful today than 20 years ago? 100 years ago?
4. What is the relationship of educational opportunity to income status?
5. Do middle- and upper-class African Americans and Latinos encounter more discrimination than do European Americans?
6. Is there a difference in the quality of family and community support among middle- and upper-income African Americans, European Americans, and Latinos?

As a result of the discussion, students begin to see how the viewpoints about race and socioeconomic backgrounds are part of a broad and complex picture. The difference of opinion has become a stimulus for deeper learning. Students then divide into three groups: one to conduct library research of relevant documents and studies; one to read and analyze relevant biographies and autobiographies; and one to interview community members who represent different cultures.

## A Holistic Approach

For culturally different students, engagement in learning is most likely to occur when they are intrinsically motivated to learn. This motivational framework provides a holistic and culturally responsive way to create, plan, and refine teaching activities, lessons, and assessment practices.

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# Four Agreements to Courageous Conversations

## Stay engaged-

Personal commitment each person makes, regardless of the engagement of others. Staying engaged means remaining morally, emotionally, intellectually, and socially involved in the dialogue. To stay engaged is to not let your heart and mind “check out” of the conversation while leaving your body in place.

## Speak your truth-

Requires a willingness to take risks. Speaking your truth means being absolutely honest about your thoughts, feelings, and opinions and not just saying what you perceive others want to hear. Without speaking his truth, the educator who has remained silent has allowed his own beliefs or opinions to be misinterpreted or misrepresented.

## Expect to experience discomfort-

Courageous conversations necessarily create discomfort for participants due to the state of racial conditions in our society. This asks participants to agree to experience discomfort so that they can deal with the reality of race in an honest and forthright way. Participants need to be personally responsible for pushing themselves into a real dialogue-the kind that may make them uncomfortable but also will lead to real growth. Such conversations require that people open up and examine their core racial beliefs, values, perceptions and behaviors.

## Expect and accept that we will not reach closure-

Encourages participants to recognize that they will not reach closure in their racial understandings or in their interracial interactions. The solution is revealed in the process of dialogue itself. We cannot discover a solution to a challenge if we have not been able to talk about it. The solutions discovered are ever forming and ever changing; therefore participants must commit to an ongoing dialogue as an essential component of their action plan.

### Sequence of Events in a Circle

The sequence of events is important. If you establish a Circle Pattern from the beginning, and use it consistently, students will know what to expect. The following sequence works well, although not every element is included in every circle. Each step in the sequence is discussed below.

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Starting the Circle<br>5-10 minutes           | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Arrive (circle keeper centers self)</li> <li>2. State the purpose of the circle</li> <li>3. Open the Circle</li> <li>4. Teach and Remember Circle Guidelines</li> <li>5. Make and Remember Agreements</li> </ol>                                                                                   |
| Doing the Work of the Circle<br>15-30 minutes | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. <b>Connection:</b> Check in Round with Talking Piece;</li> <li>7. <b>Core Activities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Building/Connection</li> <li>• Restorative Practices Content or Deeper Connection.</li> </ul> </li> <li>8. <b>Closure:</b> Check out Round</li> </ol> |
| Ending the Circle<br>5 minutes                | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Close the circle</li> <li>10. Debrief with colleagues</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |



**Step 1: Arrive (before the circle):** Check in with yourself prior to starting the circle. Assess your energy level, your emotional state, physical condition, and anything else that will have an impact on how you show up as a circle keeper. The goal is not necessarily to change anything, but simply to be aware. This awareness of your actual condition can be a powerful ally in circle keeping.

**Step 2: Opening the Circle:** After the students are seated in a circle, it is very helpful to have a routine that you use as a ceremony at the beginning of each circle. This marks a transition from regular classroom time into the “special” non-ordinary time of circle.

This is a good time to place items into the center of the circle to help give it focus. Some teachers read a poem or some inspirational prose, or place a battery-powered candle or flowers in the center.

**Step 3: Teach Circle Guidelines:** Remind the class of, or ask them to recall, the guidelines that reliably help circles function well. Write them on the board as students recall or use posters. They are:

1. **Respect the talking piece**
  - a. Give those who hold it your full attention
  - b. When you are holding it give full attention to your truth
  - c. Speak to the center of the circle

- d. Handle the talking piece respectfully
2. **Speak from the heart:** Speak for yourself: your perspectives, needs, experiences
  - a. Trust that what comes from the heart will be what the circle needs
3. **Listen from the heart:** Let go of stories that make it hard to hear others
4. **Say just enough:** without feeling rushed, say what you need to say (“lean expression”)
5. Trust that you will know what to say when it is your turn to speak: no need to rehearse

**Step 4: Make and Remember Agreements:** In addition to the intentions, which apply to all circles, each individual class should be given multiple opportunities to make additional agreements, for example about confidentiality, gossip, and so on. Let the group find its own wording. Use a like “fists to five” to generate consensus. All agreements should be by consensus. Agreements are not imposed by an authority; they are negotiated by the group.

**Step 5: Connection:** Do a check in Round with the talking piece. Begin every circle with a check-in round, in which all students are invited to respond to a question. This gives students a chance to put their voice into the circle and feel connected. In the first circles, keep this question very low-risk, and make it progressively more personal at a pace the circle can handle. It can be helpful to ask students for ideas about check-in questions. Relevant questions are preferable...meaning those questions that have to do with the actual situation. So, if the students have just returned from a holiday, a relevant question might be “share something memorable from your holiday.”

**Step 6: Responding to Challenging Circumstances: Restorative Content.** If there are “live” issues to discuss, this is the time to move into them with restorative dialogue. It is important to name the issue clearly and accurately; it’s best when this comes from the students, but can also work when issues are named by the teacher. Lessons 3 and 4 in Part 3 of this manual help students learn how to identify and name issues. Note that the approach used in these lessons is to *learn about* restorative dialogue by *engaging in* it, through progressively more direct and challenging dialogues.

**Step 7: Closure Question.** Ask students to comment on their experience in the circle. If you have very little time (as is often the case) ask for a two-word checkout: “Say two words about your experience in the circle today.” This “rounds out” the circle.

**Step 8: Close the circle:** In a way that is intentional—perhaps even a bit theatrical—put away the center, ring a bell, or make some other small gesture to signal moving back from circle time into ordinary time.

**Step 9: Debrief with colleagues:** What did you learn? Any surprises? What memorable things happened that you want to remember? What frustrations did you encounter? Find a trusted friendly colleague who is also doing circles and debrief each week with these questions or similar ones. Sit in a circle and use a talking piece...trust the circle!



## Action-Based Conversations: Facilitator’s Guide to Exploring Accomplished Practice in Leadership

**Core Prop 9:** Accomplished educational leaders advocate on behalf of their schools, communities and profession. *(Standard 7: Advocacy)*

**Title: Mobilizing the Community**

**Brief Description:** Leaders will effectively advocate internally and externally to advance the organization’s vision and mission. Leaders will strategically seek, inform and mobilize influential educational, political and community leaders to advocate for all students and adults in the learning community through the use of educational case studies. Results from the collaborative study will be used to design an action plan for advocacy in leaders districts.

“Leadership is the pursuit of excellence. By having a clear vision, a belief in the power of education, and trust in the capacity of those they serve, accomplished principals pursue excellence.”

**Protocols Included: Ping Pong Protocol**

|                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Objectives</i>                                                                              |
| <i>Leaders will examine their core beliefs around advocacy for every student.</i>              |
| <i>Leaders will develop action steps that advocate for all stakeholders educational needs.</i> |

**Length/Timing:** 120 Minutes

**Materials or Special Set-up Required: LCD projector, separate tables**

|                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Before Conversation:</i>                                                                                              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have copies of the standards on hand to reference throughout the work.</li> </ul> |
| <i>In PLC: Review Standard 7 and PSEL Standard 8</i>                                                                     |

| <b>Process:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <i>Notes</i> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| In response to <a href="#">reading Standard 7</a> "how would you define "advocacy" in your school?" free write using post-it notes<br>Determine a group definition for the term “Advocacy.”<br>Whip Around after free write to develop a common understanding for the term. | ~15 min      |
| Independent reading<br>Hand out the three case studies at random (Cultural Integration, Civic (MIS) Education and Two Perspectives.<br>Have Leaders annotate the text to determine a problem and solutions to present to their group                                        | ~15 min      |



# Accomplished Leadership Series

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| <p><b>Pose The Problem</b><br/>         Someone in the group states the issue to be addressed.<br/>         This may be done in the form of a question that the group would like to explore together.</p>                                              | ~5 min  |
| <p><b>Independent Writing reflection</b><br/>         Everyone writes on the reflection questions as it pertains to the group problem.<br/>         Writing will be shared with the group.</p>                                                         | ~10 min |
| <p><b>Share the reflections</b><br/>         Each person has the opportunity to explain their own approach to the problem from their writing and they are written in bullet form on chart paper.<br/>         -Ask Clarifying questions</p>            | ~15 min |
| <p><b>Probing questions: wisdom walk</b><br/>         Each group should spend 5 minutes at the other two groups leaving questions that still need to be answered or clarified.</p>                                                                     | ~20 min |
| <p><b>Writing to synthesize what we've heard-</b><br/>         This is an opportunity for each group member to make sense of what's been stated on the post it notes and placed on the chart paper.</p>                                                | ~10 min |
| <p><b>Next Steps Conversation</b><br/>         Ideas for next steps toward addressing the problem are shared and charted. It is helpful if participants explain how they came to each next step.</p>                                                   | ~10 min |
| <p><a href="#">Action Plan Template</a> - Hand out action plan template- 10 Minutes<br/>         Ticket out- Write about one scenario where you could use this protocol to advocate for your staff or students. Fill out the Action plan template.</p> |         |

**Source(s):**

**Connections and Extensions:** [A Case Study on School Leadership: Confronting Challenges](#) by Dr. Katherine K Merseth, Editor

**Activity documented by:** Philip Weinman, NBCT Engagement Supervisor



# Accomplished Leadership Series

## Elevating the Profession through Leadership: A New Professional Learning Series

LOCATION: DATE

NATIONAL BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS

National Board Core Propositions for Accomplished Educational Leaders™

**NT3**

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### Agenda:

- Defining Advocacy
- Case Studies
- Pose the Problem
- Writing & Reflection
- Discussion
- Wisdom Walk
- Synthesizing
- Next Steps



Accomplished Leadership Series

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**Purpose:** This series is designed for building leaders. This professional learning opportunity will provide rich, deep, collaborative action-based conversations to allow the personal and professional exploration of accomplished practice in leadership.



**Essential Questions:**

- What does accomplished leadership look like and sound like, in your building, with your population?
- What is the vision? How is it communicated?
- How is student and adult learning managed and monitored?
- How are collaborative partnerships built with families, stakeholders, and communities?

Accomplished Leadership Series

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# Revisiting Our Norms



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## Norms:

- **Equity:** Mind your own airtime. Speak up or scale back as needed.
- **Respect:** Assume the best of intentions. Seek to understand. Then strive to be understood.
- **Community:** Be vulnerable and authentic. Take risks. **Collaborate.** Trust that the wisdom is within the room.
- **Growth:** Own your own learning. Challenge each other **and yourself.** Provide processing time for this complex work.
- **Results:** Stay grounded in the task. Maintain focus with high engagement and low technology. Take necessary moments outside the room. Maintain a parking lot, and always identify next steps.
- **Bring levity!**

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## Defining



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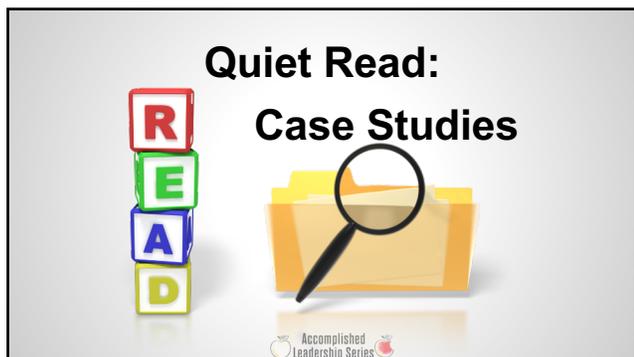
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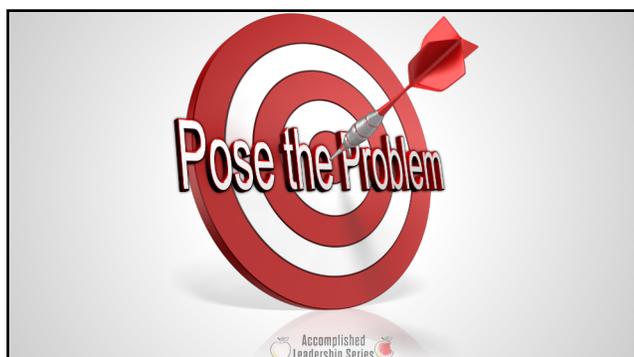
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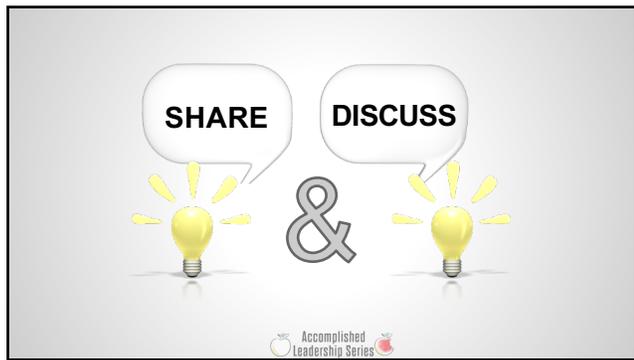
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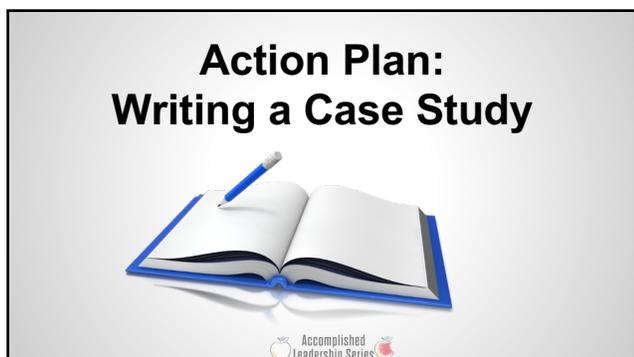
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## Standard VII Advocacy

Accomplished principals effectively advocate internally and externally to advance the organization's vision and mission. These principals strategically seek, inform, and mobilize influential educational, political, and community leaders to advocate for all students and adults in the learning community.

Accomplished principals are driven by a deep desire to enrich the lives of those they serve by supporting the interests of the organization and its members. They passionately advocate—in multiple contexts for a variety of purposes—on behalf of students and adults in the learning community as well as in the education profession. In alignment with the organization's vision, mission, and goals, these principals identify and prioritize the key issues facing their students, the learning community, and the profession. To accomplish these goals, they engage in ongoing dialogue with representatives of diverse groups.

Accomplished principals recognize and reflect on major issues confronting society that may affect students and adults, solicit input from individuals within the organization as well as the larger community, and take action. They strategically seek, inform, and mobilize educational, political, and civic leaders to advocate for the best interests of the learning community. Accomplished principals courageously navigate the advocacy process to continuously promote the goals of the organization as well as education in the broader sense as an essential element of a thriving democracy.

Accomplished principals support the interests of the organization and its members by

- advocating for the organization and the individual
- advocating in the broader context

### **Advocating for the Organization and the Individual**

Accomplished principals systemically and strategically promote the well-being of the organization. They are effective communicators who relate to and reach all their constituencies and the larger community in ways that advance the organization's vision and mission. These principals lead advocacy efforts for programs and procedures that realize the vision, mission, and goals of the organization. When an initiative

prescribed by others does not serve the mission, they advocate for the learning community's best interest.

Accomplished principals apply their command of proven marketing theories and skills to foster a recognizable brand for the organization. These principals use data to highlight and promote the positive aspects of the organization. They provide contextual background information and propose options to move the organization forward. They handle communication about issues in a competent, confident, timely, and reassuring manner, using in-person, print, and digital means.

Accomplished principals are primary resources for information about teaching and learning. They are informed advocates for educational practices and tools that lead to successful and accomplished students. They use actual and virtual platforms for sharing education's successes and challenges and are accessible to educate others. In their roles as members of professional or civic organizations or as individual educational leaders, they advocate for the advancement of the profession. Accomplished principals care deeply for teachers and are stewards that advocate for the policies, tools, resources, and support essential for teachers to do their jobs well.

Accomplished principals advocate for the welfare and well-being of each student and adult. They use data to prioritize and address issues that directly affect students and their success in the learning community. For example, if there is a move to eliminate after-school care and it has been a proven program that supports both instruction and safety for students, these principals would advocate to keep the program. Accomplished principals ensure that staff have the tools and resources required to meet the organization's goals and objectives. These principals advocate for staff members so that they feel supported when someone challenges decisions the staff members have made in the best interest of students. For example, if a theatre director had good reason to select a play that elicits controversy, these principals will advocate for the theatre director's choice.

Accomplished principals effectively communicate with staff, students, and parents, providing comprehensive language to guide all advocacy-related interactions and interventions. These principals carefully use multiple measures and instruments to assess needs and prioritize advocacy efforts. For example, they may use the responses to written and digital parent and student survey questions, conversations with colleagues, and administrative dialogue and discussions to construct fair and equitable advocacy programs and procedures.

**Advocating in the Broader Context**

Accomplished principals realize that a variety of parental, social, community, religious, political, and educational audiences have an interest in and are affected by the learning community. These principals capitalize on the multitude of possible resources in these audiences that can make major contributions to achieving the organization’s goals.

Accomplished principals mentor both internal and external stakeholders so that they can convincingly adopt a position, garner support, and evoke action. These principals commit to a wide variety of advocacy efforts and charge internal stakeholders with building relationships, coalitions, and partnerships with external constituencies to enlist support and obtain resources. They provide internal stakeholders with talking points and marketing plans so that they can influence key external groups in a consistent voice. Accomplished principals use a wide range of print and electronic media and attend a wide variety of meetings and events to make issues visible in the community as well as to recognize the importance of those stakeholders.

Accomplished principals are visible ambassadors in the learning community and in the district, city, state, or nation. They deliberately form relationships with policy makers in these venues. These principals intentionally cultivate internal and external relationships—with colleagues, central office staff, and superintendents in the district, as well as with partners in the community and in important policy positions. They invite civic leaders to visit the learning community to learn about concerns and to celebrate successes.

Accomplished principals inspire members of the community to contribute to the achievement of educational goals. These principals create collaborative networks and serve as advocates for education in the larger community. They galvanize civic leaders who have the resources to support funding, the political power to support needed policies, and the voice to champion educational causes.

**Reflections on Standard VII**

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## STANDARD 8. MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT OF FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY

**Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being.**

*Effective leaders:*

- a) Are approachable, accessible, and welcoming to families and members of the community.
- b) Create and sustain positive, collaborative, and productive relationships with families and the community for the benefit of students.
- c) Engage in regular and open two-way communication with families and the community about the school, students, needs, problems, and accomplishments.
- d) Maintain a presence in the community to understand its strengths and needs, develop productive relationships, and engage its resources for the school.
- e) Create means for the school community to partner with families to support student learning in and out of school.
- f) Understand, value, and employ the community's cultural, social, intellectual, and political resources to promote student learning and school improvement.
- g) Develop and provide the school as a resource for families and the community.
- h) Advocate for the school and district, and for the importance of education and student needs and priorities to families and the community.
- i) Advocate publicly for the needs and priorities of students, families, and the community.
- j) Build and sustain productive partnerships with public and private sectors to promote school improvement and student learning.

## TWO PERSPECTIVES

It was the year 2002, and Juan was happy with his work as a teacher at a small public school in an indigenous community. He was lucky to a very positive work environment and parents who were extremely involved with their children's' education. What most impressed him was the school community's interest in reclaiming the local cultural heritage. This interest was made evident through their traditional celebrations, in which the entire community participated: teachers, students, parents and neighbors. For Juan it was very meaningful to see how the community valued and preserved its cultural heritage and instilled this ancestral knowledge in the younger generations.

After five years working at this school, the local authorities transferred Juan to another public school, also within the indigenous community, for students from 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Thanks to his excellent professional record, he was appointed principal. 100% of the students were of indigenous ancestry, and many of the children lived with their grandparents or other family members because their parents had had to move to the city for work. The school building was a wooden construction with precarious foundations, and was not fit for the demands of a modern public school, but it was located in a beautiful valley with leafy trees and was surrounded by tall hills. Juan arrived at the school in spring.

### Celebrations

Juan's first day as principal at his new school coincided with the most important celebration of the local indigenous culture. Enthused by this important holiday, Juan assumed that the ritual here would be somewhat similar to the celebration held at his previous school.

Juan recalled that Alberto, the previous principal, had told him that if he had any questions about the day-to-day management of the school, he should not hesitate to call. Juan decided to take advantage of this offer and ask about the community's celebration.

*"Alberto, how are you?" he spoke into the receiver.*

*"Fine, thanks. How is everything going?"*

*"All right so far," he replied. "I'm calling to ask you about the indigenous celebration at school. Who is in charge of organizing these activities?"*

*"Well, you ought to speak to Roberto about that. He's a parent and he has helped out with these celebrations in the past. I'm sure he'll fill you in. Listen, I have to go now, I'm in a meeting. But I'll send you Roberto's information. See you soon and good luck," said Alberto before he hung up.*

Juan began to have doubts. The organization of the event seemed rather unclear and with only a few days left until the celebration, he called Roberto as soon as possible. Roberto was a man of medium height, with a broad, robust build and a very helpful spirit. He was always willing to lend a hand and do his part at the school. He was also very proud to be an alumnus.

*"Roberto," Juan said when he had him on the line, "How is this activity organized? I was told that you could get me up to speed."*

Roberto explained that the celebration would take place on Thursday at ten in the morning. The plan was to start out with a public prayer ritual, for which he had contacted a local healer and her assistants. In addition, he and some other parents had organized an activity to share some of the community's traditional food. Juan was surprised that the teachers at the school were not at all involved in the preparations, but he did not comment on it. Roberto kindly said goodbye, adding:

*"I am very pleased that you are in charge of the school." And with that he left for the fields to work.*

### **Getting the community involved**

That same afternoon, Juan called the teachers to a meeting, to generate some suggestions that might help plan the other activities that would take place at the celebration. There were only four days left for the event and Juan thought that they, as teachers, should be involved.

*"Listen, everyone, on Thursday we have the indigenous celebration and I wanted to know what activities you have planned for your students after the prayer that Roberto is organizing."*

*"Juan, I don't know a thing about these kinds of celebrations, so I would like to request not to be involved in the planning," answered Lucy, one of the teachers who had worked the longest at the school.*

*"But Lucy," replied Juan, surprised. "You're part of the staff and though you don't belong to the indigenous community, you have experience here. You can help out, I'm sure you can pitch in somehow."*

Lucy said nothing for a moment and then replied:

*"All right, but I'll need someone to help me because I can't do it alone."*

*"We've never had a lot of support for these events; the parents who help out are always the same ones and the rest just show up when everything's ready. Besides, over the years, I've gotten the feeling that the parents don't feel very comfortable participating in this celebration," added Pedro, who also had many years of experience in the school.*

This particular bit of input made Juan stop and wonder, but he decided to go on with the meeting. After a pause he said:

*"People, we have to change this attitude and encourage students and parents to commit to the kids' education both in and out of the classroom. This is an excellent opportunity to do just that."*

*"Juan, what do you have in mind for commemorating this event?" asked Viviana, the youngest teacher on staff.*

Juan stopped to think for a moment and answered:

*"Well, since it's such an important celebration, ideally each grade should organize an activity. It could be a traditional dance, a song, a performance. This is also a good opportunity invite some local authorities, parents, too. What do you think?"*

After a few moments of silence, everyone agreed.

*"Fine, then, but we still haven't established what each of us is doing," said Claudia, a first grade teacher.*

*"I agree with you, Juan. Each teacher ought to organize something with his or her class," said Luis, a teacher who had recently arrived at the school.*

*"I can make some holiday decorations, but I'll need some help because I don't know much about it," responded Daniela, a new teacher and recent college graduate who had lived her entire life in the city.*

### **The big day**

The big day arrived. Juan was very anxious for everything to go well with this celebration because it would be his first public event as the school principal. With great anticipation and expectation, he arrived at the school early in the morning to help get things going. When Roberto saw him, he greeted him warmly and said:

*"Good morning, Juan! Listen, we have a problem, we have to pick up Rosa, the healer who will be performing the prayer ceremony. We need a car to bring her here."*

*"I can go," said Juan, "But will you come with me? I'm still not familiar with the roads here."*

Together they went to pick her up. Rosa was short, had a small face and was dressed in her culture's traditional clothing. When they got back, just in time, she began the ceremony with a prayer in her language in an improvised shrine at the schoolyard. A number local authorities were present, and everyone respectfully watched the ceremony. However, Juan noticed that many of the teachers and a number of parents did not actively participate—on the contrary, they watched at a distance, not getting involved. He was surprised because the children's participation was also less than inspiring.

Juan saw things more clearly now: a number of parents and students seemed uninterested in celebrating their culture's ancestry. To try to process what was going on, he called María into his office. María was a member of the administrative staff and had been at the school for fifteen years; she seemed to understand the culture of the school very well. When she arrived at his office, he said,

*"María, I want to talk to you because I need your opinion on something. The other day, the day of the celebration, I noticed that the community didn't really participate much. Why do you think this happened?"*

*"Don Juan, I know the school tries to celebrate and preserve our people's ancestral culture, but it creates sort of a special problem. Most of us belong to a religion that does not accept adoration of anything that is not our God," María replied.*

Juan was surprised by her answer but felt he was now beginning to grasp the situation. The problem was that now he was very unsure about what to do. On the one hand, the Ministry of Education had passed Decree 280, which ordered schools in areas with significant indigenous populations to work on reclaiming their ancestral culture. On the other hand, most of the parents seemed opposed to this policy.

The next week the principal received a visit from Pedro, the father of one of the students. Shortly into the conversation, Pedro asked:

*"Juan, why do you teach our children about the language and customs of our ancestral culture? It isn't going to do them any good. Wouldn't it be better to reinforce other subjects that will be more useful to them in the future?"*

Juan told Pedro that according to government policy it was mandatory to teach the local language and customs in all schools where more than 20% of the students belonged to a particular ethnic group. Pedro sighed and said,

*"Well, it doesn't make much sense to me." He then said goodbye and thanked Juan for the meeting.*

The meeting made Juan even more uneasy than before, because it was an opinion that came directly from a school parent. This might well become a problem, and he would have to be the one to find a solution. In his effort to learn more about the community's thoughts on the matter, Juan turned to Trinidad, a parent with a good deal of influence at the school because of her contribution to the school's activities.

*"Trinidad," he asked her one day, "What do you think about the policy of including ancestral culture in the classroom?"*

*"Listen," Trinidad said, "I understand that for some of the parents, especially the older ones, it is very important that their children and grandchildren learn about their cultural background. But this is not as important for the new generations. Honestly, I'd rather the kids learn other subjects that will be more useful to them. You and I both know that more and more people are moving to the cities in search of a better life; here in the country there's no future for these kids. If we want them to get ahead in life, we have to prepare them well... For a large group of parents and teachers it doesn't make much sense for the school to teach about cultural heritage because it won't help their kids' academic achievement. It might even be an obstacle when the kids try to relate to other people who could discriminate against them."*

Trinidad paused, looked the principal in the eye, and added:

*"Another important thing that you should know is that most of us belong to an evangelical church. We don't believe in worshipping a god other than the one in the Bible. You can understand that, can't you?"*

*"Of course I do, Maria told me. As a school, we are going to have to be careful with this topic, and be open to different ways of thinking, even if it takes us a while."*

### **The surprise**

Two weeks later Juan received a letter from the district authorities indicating that he was to call parents to a special meeting, to inform them about the new government guidelines regarding the inclusion of cultural heritage in the classroom.

He called for the meeting the following week. In attendance were 56 out of 68 parents, a government employee, the school principal and the cultural heritage teacher. The meeting started with a standard greeting from Juan and a presentation from the government authorities. Fernando, a government worker with many years of experience who was well-versed in the matter, informed his audience:

*"The purpose of this meeting is to learn what you as parents think about how the school is doing regarding cultural heritage education. We'll also be distributing a survey on some of the most relevant cultural subjects."*

Fernando launched into his questions:

*Do you think it's important to preserve your cultural heritage? Do you value your cultural heritage? How many of you speak your culture's original language?*

The parents remained silent and Juan encouraged them to respond by saying:

*"It is very important for us, as a school, to know your opinion. As parents you are an active part of your kids' education, and your opinion matters to us."*

After a long pause one of the parents spoke up:

*"Nobody speaks our culture's language at home any more. Our grandparents used to speak it, but that knowledge has gotten lost over time."*

Luisa, a new parent at the school added:

*"I respect the work you do at this school, Juan, but I would also like my daughter to learn other subjects that might be more useful to her. I want my daughter to be able to go to Santiago to work at something different. I'd be thrilled if she could learn computers or English—that will be much more helpful to her when she needs to find a job. So, no, I can't understand why you would want to increase the number of cultural heritage class hours!"*

The audience started whispering furiously, and Juan responded:

*"Luisa, at the last meeting I informed you that this increase in hours is due to a mandatory government policy based on international treaties regarding indigenous cultures."*

After some more parents commented on the matter, Fernando distributed a survey that they would have to answer and return the next day. All the questions were directly related to the knowledge the parents had of their cultural heritage.

Early the next day, Juan sent an assistant to the classrooms to collect the surveys. To his surprise, of the 56 surveys handed out, only 10 were returned. Of those, only four parents completed the survey, while the remaining six were incomplete. Juan confessed to his assistant that perhaps the survey was not the best way to gather the information they needed. In spite of the principal's insistence, the parents had no interest in participating in this important task.

**Questions for reflection**

1. How might Juan balance the different points of view in this case?
2. What role should teachers, parents and students have in making decisions in this type of situation?
3. What should Juan do? Why?
4. What role should the educational authorities (municipal and national) play in this kind of situation?
5. How might the school help the families to embrace their own culture?
6. Is it appropriate to encourage a community to cultivate acceptance of their ancestral culture?

## CIVIC (MIS)EDUCATION

The school where Ernesto worked as principal was a non-denominational private school with a student population of 1300 boys and girls, ranging from preschool to twelfth grade, most of the students coming from middle to upper-middle class families. The parents were, in large part, professionals in a variety of different fields: many were business owners in the production sector, while others were providers of important services in the province. The school employed 60 teachers, as well as a team of specialists to address specific student needs. An executive committee was in place to assist the principal in making decisions and implementing projects aimed at helping the students to achieve academic excellence. Parents participated in school-organized community activities, especially the monthly assemblies at which the school delivered information on school management and student performance. The Parents' Association participated at these assemblies through a delegate that had a seat on the School Council, proposing and debating alternatives related to the curricular and non-curricular goals proposed by the school.

Everything about the monthly meeting of the Parents' Assembly, the fourth one this year, had gone more or less as planned, with Ernesto delivering a report on the school's results for the previous year's SIMCE, the test by which the Chilean Education Ministry evaluates student performance. Ernesto had been principal at this private school for 15 years and was particularly proud of the school's academic record during his tenure. Solid scores had been maintained in math and language, placing the school above average for its socioeconomic bracket.

At the meeting, Ernesto reminded the parents about how important it was to give their kids consistent, continued support in their studies:

*"It is really important for you, as parents, to stress reading and to take advantage of school resources such as the library, and to talk to your kids and listen to their needs."*

Just as the meeting was coming to an end, the president of the Parents' Association, Juan Cortés, raised his hand. Turning to the principal, he asked:

*"What is the school's position regarding the secondary school students' decision not to attend class during the student protest planned for next Thursday, as they did at the protests last week?"*

Ernesto could feel the eyes of every mother and father there staring at him; the atmosphere was silent, expectant. Doing his very best to summon his authority as school principal, Ernesto calmly replied,

*"I do not agree with the protest march, and much less with the idea of our students missing class to participate in it, given that they not only miss out on learning opportunities, but they risk their physical safety by doing so. For this reason, when the students asked for our permission to take part in the nationwide protest march, we said no. I want you to know that we considered this matter with great care and it was only after a great deal of reflection that we came to this decision. As school policy, we do not support students' absence from class. We do however, believe that the students have legitimate reasons for protesting." He paused and then closed by saying, "I want you all to be assured that we are carefully monitoring this situation."*

As soon as the words came out of his mouth, he flashed back to a recent conversation with his son, Camilo, a university student and alumnus of Ernesto's school. Camilo had made it very clear to his father that he supported the right of all Chileans to quality public education and, as such, supported the nationwide student protest march that the secondary school and university student associations had organized.

*"Dad, I'm going on strike. The student assembly voted in favor of the strike, and I am basically in agreement with the demands...but don't worry, nothing's going to happen at your school—as usual."*

This conversation, the recent events at the school, and now the concern raised by the Parents' Association had left Ernesto feeling increasingly uncomfortable, uneasy. He tried hard to recall other occasions in which his students had taken a stand on other issues, and he had to acknowledge that he had never allowed the students at the school to participate in these types of events. He also thought back to his own university years and his refusal to participate in any type of protest that might jeopardize the efforts his own family had made to put him through college, efforts that had allowed him to become the family's first college graduate.

With all these thoughts racing through his mind, Ernesto suddenly felt the need to talk things over with his son again. He called Camilo on his cell phone, to find out what time he'd be coming home that weekend. The answer, however, was not what he hoped.

*"I can't come home, Dad, we have student assembly," he said, and added, "I suppose at your school things are business as usual? Tough luck for those kids, sounds like they'll have to wait until after graduation to make themselves heard."*

Ernesto could feel the disappointment in his son's voice, and didn't know what to say. He answered meekly:

*"We'll see. Hope to see you and talk sometime soon."*

That weekend was a strange one for Ernesto. He was distracted; all he could think about was this dilemma that had him so stumped: he wondered what to do with the students and their constant demands to protest. What would he do if they participated despite his policy? What he would say to the parents if this happened? His wife noticed that something odd was going on with him and, concerned, asked if he was feeling okay.

*"I'm fine, don't worry," he lied. "I'm just a little tired, that's all."*

### **More conversations, more information**

First thing Monday morning, Ernesto called in Germán, the school's history teacher, to talk to him about the dilemma he was facing. Specifically he needed to talk about the question posed by the parents' association president. Germán, who was the adviser to the Students' Association, was known for his academic leadership, and Ernesto turned to him because he knew that at the next meeting he would need to give the parents some very emphatic and decisive answers.

Speaking to Germán very deliberately, he said,

*"I'm sure you understand that for me, as the person responsible for the entire school, this is a very complex situation, since we cannot risk the school's reputation, and we have to make sure that the students' families do not become uncomfortable or angry with us. In addition, if anything happens to our students, I am the one responsible for their safety."*

Germán listened attentively and then offered a description, from his perspective, of how things had come to pass:

*"Listen, it was during one of my classes with the 12th grade students that the issue of the student protests came up. You and I both know the impact that those marches had, in the city and all across the country. In that context, I told them that it is our civic obligation to express our opinions. But honestly, Ernesto, it was not my intention to encourage them to boycott coming to class."*

Germán added that he couldn't take responsibility for a decision the students made, but softened the blow by saying,

*"Listen, it's not such a big deal. After all, the students only boycotted classes, which was a peaceful way of allying themselves with the movement." Germán looked Ernesto in the eye and then, in a challenging tone of voice, reminded him: "Or do you not agree with one of the objectives that is clearly stated in the school's educational mission, that it is the school's role to 'develop critical*

*thinking?' In that sense, Ernesto, neither the students nor I have done anything wrong. Moreover, though this issue did come up at the Students' Association, I am not sure that those students were the ones urging the others to boycott classes."*

Germán's position was clear. As advisor to the Students' Association he believed that the school ought to create spaces for the students to express their opinions with regard to the student movement that was taking place in Chile. But Ernesto just wasn't sure if that stance was a feasible one for the school.

### **Protests at the door to the school**

Throughout the city, several secondary schools joined the protests and the marches became an almost everyday event. One of the caravans planted itself directly in front of Ernesto's school while the students were attending classes, which at the time were still functioning normally. The screams from outside, of protesters exhorting the students to join the marches, grew more insistent and intense when the students went outside for recess. Some students in the older grades asked permission to join the march, but Ernesto denied all requests, which created an atmosphere of tension both in and out of the school.

After several days of protests, the head teachers of each grade, along with members of the Students' Association, met with Ernesto in the hope of reaching a consensus on how the students might protest and express their dissent. As they discussed the issue, they ruled out the idea of occupying the school, but they did demand that Ernesto state publicly his position regarding the Chilean students' rights to have access to quality higher education that would be free of cost to those unable to afford it.

Ernesto was in a tight spot. He truly believed that one of the most important challenges for students in the 21st century was to develop critical thinking and the ability to express their beliefs. If this wasn't an opportunity for them to do that, what was? Once more, the words of his son reverberated in his ears: "Don't worry, nothing's going to happen at your school—as usual."

Shortly before his next monthly assembly with the parents, Ernesto brought up the issue at the Executive Committee meeting, where he listened to a number of differing opinions on the previous month's student protests and the most recent state of affairs. Opinions varied: some people wanted to support the protests with information sessions and gatherings for discussion and reflection, while others wanted to join the students marching and take to the streets the next time a protest was planned. This, they felt, would allow the young people to take part in the popular demand for equity and social justice.

Ernesto still couldn't decide what position to take. What was he going to do?

**Questions for reflection**

1. What would you do if you were in Ernesto's position?
2. Do you think this case is a lesson in civic responsibility?
3. As principal, what kind of leadership would you demonstrate with the students?
4. What actions would you have taken as a teacher in response to the students' concerns?
5. What stance would you adopt with the parents in order to position the leadership focus that the school wishes to offer its students?
6. Is Ernesto's attitude toward his students consistent, knowing his son's position?

## CULTURAL INTEGRATION: A CHALLENGE INSIDE THE CLASSROOM

In 2012, Juan accepted a job as Academic Coordinator at a vocational-technical school for grades 7 to 12 in the center of Santiago. This experience would be substantially different from all of Juan's previous teaching jobs in that 28% of the students at this school were from Perú.

When Juan arrived at the school, the atmosphere was one of uncertainty: both the matriculation rate and academic results were not optimal, with low scores on the nationwide standardized tests and very disappointing qualifying test scores for college admissions.

### A first impression

On his first day at work, Juan focused on observing the various educational processes taking place at the school, in order to reach his own conclusions about what was going on in terms of general administration, curricular management, academic life, and resource allocation, as well as other areas.

One thing that caught his eye was the monthly assembly held to commemorate certain important historical dates on the calendar. To this end, each teacher would prepare a small gesture or reflection for the assembly. In the month of May, however, the celebratory event was the Naval Battle of Iquique, which caused a certain degree of consternation among the students of Peruvian origin. The Battle of Iquique took place on 21 May 1879 in the context of the War of the Pacific between Perú and Chile, in the city of the same name in northern Chile. The battle ended when the Chilean ship *Esmeralda* sank and its captain, Arturo Prat Chacón, as well as a large number of his crew, died at the hands of the Peruvian forces on board the *Huáscar*, captained by Admiral Miguel Grau.

The assembly took place as planned, but Juan could see the Peruvian students exchange surprised looks when the teacher in charge read the story of what had happened during the naval battle. At the end of the assembly, one of the students approached Juan and asked,

*"Why isn't Miguel Grau described as a master strategist, a hero?"*

Juan stared blankly at the student, unable to come up with an answer. The question haunted him for some time after that.

A few weeks later, Juan noticed clusters of the Peruvian students forming in the halls and in a corner of the courtyard, making plans to watch a soccer game the following weekend, a classic South American

showdown: Perú versus Chile. When he realized what this was all about, Juan innocently inquired where the game was to be played, and the students all responded,

*"You don't know?? In Lima, and we're going to win, 4-nothing!" they cried jubilantly.*

They were right: Perú won the game, and the Peruvian students made this abundantly clear the morning after, when they showed up at school proudly wearing their Peruvian team T-shirts. Juan enthusiastically congratulated them, noticing all the while that the other students basically ignored them. He couldn't help but feel terribly uncomfortable about the situation.

One of Juan's many responsibilities was coordinating the students' professional internships. When he began to assign internships to each of his students, he was shocked that some companies refused to accept Peruvians as interns, primarily because of their ethnic origins and their physical appearance, and without any regard for their academic and/or disciplinary merits. Wendy, a Peruvian student at the top of her class, was having a hard time understanding why a company located in one of the city's wealthier districts had chosen to take on a Chilean student with a comparatively poor academic record. Wendy began to wonder what was the point of all her hard work and efforts. Didn't she also have the right to an internship in the sales department of a prestigious company?

*"Sir, she doesn't even know how to use a calculator but they took her anyway, just because she's pretty and Chilean! Life is so unfair here in Chile!" stormed Wendy.*

*"Don't worry, we're going to find you a fine place for your internship," Juan replied; it was the only thing he could think of to say to her.*

One cold winter morning, Juan entered one of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade math classrooms to carry out a routine teacher observation. Very quickly he realized that the Peruvian students barely interacted with their Chilean peers. The Peruvians sat on one side of the room and the Chileans on the other. He could see that Wendy was having trouble confronting both her classmates and the teacher. Juan walked over to her and, with concern, quietly asked her what was going on. Her eyes flashing with anger, Wendy blurted out,

*"They always treat us so badly, they've discriminated against us since the minute we arrived in Chile. It's all their fault!"*

The bitterness and pain Wendy felt were all too evident. The other Peruvian students in the class suddenly fell silent and could only nod their heads in agreement. The Chilean students, on the other hand, seemed unfazed and unaware, and continued writing in their math workbooks. When Juan left the classroom, a deep silence penetrated the atmosphere.

Juan went into his office and poured himself a cup of coffee. He knew that bridging these two worlds, so seemingly different, would not be an easy task. He recalled a story he had heard one day in the teachers' lounge, about a Chilean parent that had taken his daughter out of the school because she had started dating a Peruvian boy. Because his daughter was the best student in her class, the father felt that this relationship would have dire consequences for her. As Juan recalled this situation, he quickly finished his coffee and spent some time responding to emails that had piled up in his inbox. As he did this, he suddenly decided to request a meeting with the principal of the school, Estrella. The meeting was set for the afternoon.

In Estrella's office, after exchanging greetings, Juan brought up the case of the Chilean girl who had left the school. Upon hearing this, the principal remarked, in a cold tone of voice, "You know, Juan, that 80% of the school's top academic results come from the Peruvian kids." She continued:

*"We've had these results for the last couple of years now. At the end-of-the-year award ceremonies, if you look closely, you'll see that most of the parents in the audience are Peruvian."*

For a long while, Juan mulled over the significance of her words, but he wasn't sure what she meant by them. Did the principal support the presence of Peruvian students in the school? Did she want the Peruvian students there only because of their good academic results?

After winter break, it was time for the July assembly. Carlos, a Chilean student, gave a speech about Flag Day within the context of the War of the Pacific, and he also spoke about Peruvian Independence Day, which was celebrated that same month. To commemorate the date, Juan and a group of Peruvian students organized a surprise for the community. At the end of the assembly, the Peruvian students rose and sang the Peruvian national anthem. They did so solemnly and with dignity, at first softly and then louder and clearer than ever. The Chilean students and teachers listened in silence, astonished.

At the end of the assembly, a Peruvian 12<sup>th</sup> grader named Jean-Pierre, clearly moved by the gesture, walked up to Juan and said to him:

*"Sir, I heard that you were the person who encouraged us to sing our national anthem. It's been four years since I have heard or sung my national anthem. Thank you so much."*

After the ceremony, Juan walked down the hall to his office, thinking about what had just happened. Suddenly, he heard loud voices coming from the teachers' lounge. Carlos, an art teacher and one of the most veteran members of the school staff, was making remarks about what he had just seen in assembly.

*"What happened at assembly was incredible. I never thought I would see the Peruvian students singing their national anthem and the Chilean students watching them with respect."*

*"Live and learn, right?" answered Juan, walking into the lounge. "I thought that was a nice surprise, to see that our students are capable of treating their peers with respect—the kind of respect you don't always see in the courtyard or in the classroom."*

*"They've earned that respect in the classroom. This school has had many generations of excellent Peruvian students," replied Roberto, a biology teacher.*

*"If this keeps up, the school's going to fill up with Peruvians," was an ironic remark made by Marcelo, a math teacher.*

*"That's right—you shouldn't worry, then, it means we'll have work for a long time," remarked Pamela, a Spanish teacher.*

Her words elicited a round of smiles among the teachers in the room.

And so the year came to a close. Nobody seemed at all surprised to see that the top students in each class were Peruvian. As always at the end-of-the-year ceremonies, there was a big turnout among the Peruvian families, who participated with respect. At the end of the day's event, Alexis, one of the Peruvian students, approached Juan and said:

*"This vacation is going to be long; my friends and I have nowhere to hang out and it's even going to be hard for us to put food on the table."*

Juan hugged him affectionately, and couldn't help but reflect on all that had come to pass that year. He decided that the next challenge for the school community would be an act of Chilean-Peruvian integration.

### **Time for decisions**

As the new academic year began, the management team reviewed the calendar, planning the different activities that would take place over the course of the school year. Juan decided to suggest that the school host a community encounter featuring different aspects of Peruvian culture.

*"Our school," Juan said to his colleagues, "ought to make an effort to integrate the students and families from Perú. I'd like to propose the creation of our first Expo Perú, to help disseminate*

*and celebrate Peruvian culture at our school, as an opportunity to strengthen the educational community in general, and promote cultural integration both in and out of the classroom."*

*"Would this just be just a cultural exhibition?" asked Estrella, the principal.*

Juan explained that it would be more ambitious than that.

*"No, no," he said, "I'm thinking about something more ambitious than tacking up a few posters. We should try to be serious about this. Learning and integrating cultures should be the goal of our school."*

*"What would the students do, exactly?" asked Marcela, the art teacher.*

Juan described his plan:

*"The Chilean and Peruvian students will have to work together to create, among other things, a display about Peruvian Independence Day, and they'll have to work as a team to resolve whatever differences they have."*

*"Who else do you see participating in the event?" asked the school owner.*

*"We'll have to invite different representatives of the Peruvian community in Chile, so that our Peruvian students will feel acknowledged, and then also local media, authorities, and others," replied Juan.*

Marcelo, the math teacher, voiced his skepticism yet again:

*"Nice idea Juan, but aren't we a school about math, science, literature, the arts? This isn't a cultural integration society! How is this going to improve our test scores?" Growing more exasperated Marcelo turned to the school head and asked: "We receive Chilean taxpayers' money. Don't we have an obligation to be a Chilean school?"*

The staff members present turned to Estrella, the principal, to see her reaction. Estrella only smiled, indicating neither approval nor disapproval of Juan's plan.

There were a great many questions running through Juan's mind by now, but after so many months of dealing with the sensitive matter of inclusion and exclusion at the school, there was one thing he knew for sure: this activity would be a real learning experience for the entire school. It was an opportunity to bring true cultural integration to this Chilean school and its classrooms. But could he risk causing even more problems in the school—and for himself—by defending a position that was clearly a source of conflict?

**Questions for reflection**

1. Does it make sense for Juan to press for the Expo Perú?
2. Should the school principal intervene?
3. Should Juan have gotten the Peruvian students organized?
4. Do you think Juan might lose his job?
5. Do you think the Chilean students, parents and legal guardians are capable of rising to the occasion?
6. How might the Peruvian families react to this activity?



A Casebook on  
School Leadership

# CONFRONTING CHALLENGES

**CASE STUDIES FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS**



Dr. Katherine K. Merseeth, Editor

# **Confronting Challenges: Case Studies for School Principals**

## **A Casebook on School Leadership**

**Katherine Merseth, Editor**

Sponsored by  
Ministry of Education, Chile  
Harvard-Chile Innovation Initiative  
David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies,  
Regional Office in Santiago, Chile  
2015



**Addressing Challenges: Case Studies for  
Principals**

A Casebook on School Leadership

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## PRESENTATION

Our schools are complex organizations that are constantly changing. Thus, new challenges continue emerging for school principals, who are now aware of the need to make a definite turn from traditional forms of school management to a new pedagogical approach to teaching, learning, and improving students' academic performance. Nowadays, it is not enough to overcome these challenges by creating one solution for all issues across the board. It is essential to make an ethical commitment to address them alongside stakeholders involved in the teaching and learning processes and the dilemmas that result on a daily basis in our schools.

With this purpose in mind, the Center for Training, Experimentation and Research in Pedagogy (CPEIP<sup>1</sup>), in collaboration with Harvard University, invited 15 school principals, recipients of the School Principal Training Program (PFD<sup>2</sup>) scholarships, to develop case studies about their schools for this book. The chosen school principals had already learned and mastered new leadership skills in 7 schools participating in PFD, which aims to train and empower school principals to confront challenges in their institutions, acknowledging their role as eminently pedagogical. This book seeks to contribute to the training of future educational leaders through a number of cases, one per author, showcasing a series of dilemmas. The main purpose of the cases is to foster reflection on these dilemmas among school leaders and other stakeholders and engage them in dialogue about potential solutions to those issues, giving them tools to confront similar situations at their schools.

Reflecting everyday experiences at schools around the country, this book presents a series of situations to be analyzed, compared, contrasted, studied and discussed by those who want to be part of this new approach to education and school leadership. The book aims to encourage and contribute to the reflection on the situations that school principals, along with their teams, must confront and resolve in their roles as pedagogical leaders.

It is important to mention that this sample of cases, authored by school directors, is registered under the School Principal Training Program, a government initiative promulgated by the Decree No. 44 on January 27th, 2011, with the purpose of providing professional development to school principals to give a significant boost to pedagogical leadership. Therefore, it is intended for future educational leaders to take charge in transforming their schools into institutions of educational excellence, taking

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<sup>1</sup> Spanish acronym

<sup>2</sup> Spanish acronym

into consideration and reflecting on the experiences lived in classrooms. This will contribute positively to student learning and social relationships and interactions found in teaching and learning environments.

In the critical reflection encouraged through this book, the readers should view the dilemmas as learning opportunities, considering that the schools presented in each case are organizations with diverse processes and everyday practices, which when analyzed from different angles can promote continuous learning. Thus, the cases offer multiple opportunities for the readers to practice different leadership approaches, better understand the role of each of the actors in the education system, and reflect on these situations using their own personal experiences as reference.

As evident in the cases, many variables have influence on the role and responsibilities of school principals, such as: leadership protocols, organizational structure and learning, teacher performance, student performance, and interactions among stakeholders and members of the community, among others. Each of the cases presented in this book showcases many of these variables.

We want to thank participating institutions for supporting this initiative and for their motivation in contributing to the process of training current and future school principals.

We also want to acknowledge all of the schools principals who contributed selflessly with their expertise in this publication.

With this initiative, we hope to provide future teachers and school principals with a space for reflection and analysis of the realities that they will encounter once they enter the world of education. Furthermore, we hope that this contributes to their personal and professional development, as the book encourages them to analyze their behavior and better understand their apprehensions and actions, using real and challenging situations present daily in schools as tools. This will enable future teachers and school principals to face complex situations and make decisions in a responsible, reflective, empathetic and assertive way, which will help improve the quality of the education for the boys and girls in our country.

Rodolfo Bonifaz Suárez  
Chief of CPEIP  
Lo Barnechea, Chile  
January, 2015.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many individuals in governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations in Chile worked to support this project. Initial conversations and encouragement from Ms. Violeta Arancibia, who was the Director of the Center for Training, Experimentation and Research in Pedagogy—Centro de Perfeccionamiento, Experimentación e Investigaciones Pedagógicas (CPEIP) and is now Professor of Psychology at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile and Visiting Scholar at Stanford’s Center for Latin American Studies, who provided the initial spark that enabled the project to begin. Ms. Arancibia brought the skills of several members of the CPEIP team to help with the planning and implementation of the idea. Others at CPEIP have continued to support the effort and helped bring it to completion including Mr. Rodolfo Bonifaz, the current director of CPEIP and Juan Carlos Rozas the Coordinator of the Area of Directors Management and Leadership.

Of course, no book or collection of cases would be possible without the significant contribution of time and effort from more than 30 principals and school directors from across Chile. These individuals attended a two-day training in the methods of writing cases in Santiago, followed by several months of drafts and rounds of editing. The willingness of these individuals to share their experiences in order to benefit others is a result of their commitment to education.

In addition, the work would not have been possible without tremendous support and assistance provided by the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies Regional Office in the leadership of its former director, Ned Strong. It was through the Regional Office that the project connected to the expert and efficient translation skills of Ms. Alejandra Méndez and Ms. Kristina Cordero who patiently translated several iterations of the cases to arrive at their final form.

Finally the support of the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the assistance of my colleague, Professor James Honan, helped make this extraordinary vision a reality.

Katherine K. Merseth  
Senior Lecturer, Harvard Graduate School of Education  
Cambridge, MA, January 2015

## FOREWORD

Chile's national agenda revolves around improving education. While there is considerable debate about how the system should be improved, there is no doubt that leadership at the school level is perhaps the most important element in stimulating change. This case book is a fundamental tool to contribute to excellence in school leadership. It is one of the inaugural projects of the Harvard-Chile Innovation Initiative--HCII, a program begun in 2013 when Chile's Ministry of the Economy approached Harvard's David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies Regional Office in Santiago with a project to establish a collaborative research fund. The fund was established through the National Council for Scientific and Technological Research--CONICYT later that year. The fund has a mandate to develop collaborative projects reflecting the goals of the Chile-Massachusetts Program in the fields of education, energy, and biotechnology.

Professor Katherine Merseth, the Director of Harvard University's Teacher Education Program and a distinguished expert on school leadership and teacher development, was awarded one of the first grants of the HCII fund. She proposed to assemble teams of school principals and universities to develop a book of cases by school principals themselves to provide real-life case studies to be used for in-service training for school principals and to be distributed among education faculties to develop essential skills for future school leaders using the case methodology, an effective pedagogical tool seldom used outside of business schools in Latin America. She invited Harvard's Professor James Honan, co-Chair of Harvard Graduate School of Education Institute for Educational Management, to assist her in the development of over 30 cases, 15 of which were selected for publication. The David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies is proud to have been part of this effort.

Ned Strong  
Executive Director  
David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies  
Cambridge, MA

## INTRODUCTION

The cases in this volume represent a long tradition of pedagogical materials used for the education of professionals in many fields. Education training programs in fields such as business, law, medicine, education and social work often develop and use case materials (Merseth, 1991; 1996). By reading these cases, school leaders will learn to diagnose problems, recognize multiple influences and perspectives on schooling and student learning, and engage in rich and informative conversations with other professionals. Together with colleagues, the cases and their discussions will foster an intellectual and practical investigation of the complexities and dilemmas replete in K-12 Latin American education.

### **What are cases?**

There are many different definitions of a case in higher education and professional contexts. In this volume, cases are best understood as narratives that attempt to describe, as completely as possible, practice in schools and classrooms. They present multiple perspectives, including the views of the school director or principal, the school management board, parents, teachers and in some cases, students and families.

These cases are real and explore vexing dilemmas that the authors have encountered in their school settings. They are real; they are not made-up. These cases are not research case studies as is found frequently in academically oriented work (Yin, 2003). Instead, the cases presented in this project offer a description of an event in a school context and do not offer any form of analysis of the situation. Instead, the analysis is the responsibility of the readers.

### **How are cases used?**

The intention of cases in this volume is to stimulate discussion, either in a university program training school directors and principals or in professional development settings provided within schools. Well written cases should cause participants to reflect not only on the situation described in the case narrative, but also to explore how the ideas and actions described in the case might apply to their own school. After a discussion about the events is presented in the case, most discussion groups first move to consider how the events in the case might apply to their own setting and then further generalize the ideas, concepts and perspectives more broadly to other schools in the region.

Cases often encompass a dilemma—an action or decision forcing situation—in which reasonable readers may disagree about what the case protagonist has said or should do, or even about the basic interpretation of the situation. Because the cases are real, they are compelling, usually asking the

reader to make a recommendation about what should happen next. In addition, cases help the reader learn about multiple school settings and characteristics that may differ from their own experience, thus broadening the professional learning.

Case discussions may have a designated facilitator or they may be leaderless. If the group is without a facilitator, then participants must be mindful to encourage the views of all group members since these are situations that will ring true and familiar to most school personnel. While some participants might be more vocal than others, everyone's opinion is valuable.

### **How were these cases developed?**

School directors, principals and teachers from across Chile came together and donated their time and energy over the course of nearly 2 years to produce the cases in this volume. They first attended a 2-day training at CPEIP where they studied model cases and learned approaches to writing cases. Professors James Honan and Katherine Merseeth from the Harvard Graduate School of Education led these trainings.

After this introduction, the practitioners drafted short descriptions of potential cases and solicited feedback from the project leaders. With additional feedback, full case drafts versions were submitted by over 30 authors. A subset of fifteen cases was selected for this volume because of space and editing limitations. This was an unfortunate reduction as the project received many more viable drafts than could be accommodated. Finally, with the expert assistance of translators, editing and revisions were shared over several months until the final versions were completed.

These cases represent real stories that often caused professional challenges for the writers when they occurred and subsequently when they re-visited the situation and wrote about them. Names and some details have been changed to preserve the anonymity of the participants. The project owes enormous gratitude to the authors and the many others who made the project possible.

## **CASES**

### **List of Cases**

#### **Leadership: Dilemmas Regarding the Purpose of Schools**

- Civic (mis)education
- Cultural integration: A challenge inside the classroom
- Two perspectives
- Training for work and training for life
- The role of the school: What are the limits?

#### **Working with Multiple Stakeholders Including Boards**

- Conflicting approaches
- The sound of a bell

#### **Leading Teacher Teams and Groups of Teachers**

- Quality for all or for some?
- Building a path for improving school climate and culture

#### **Leading Teachers**

- Inclusive education: Success for all or success for some?
- A matter of vocation
- Education for all – or almost all?
- The elusive decision
- No way back
- A question of ethics: Student vs. teacher

**Leadership: Dilemmas Regarding  
the Purpose of Schools**

## CIVIC (MIS)EDUCATION

The school where Ernesto worked as principal was a non-denominational private school with a student population of 1300 boys and girls, ranging from preschool to twelfth grade, most of the students coming from middle to upper-middle class families. The parents were, in large part, professionals in a variety of different fields: many were business owners in the production sector, while others were providers of important services in the province. The school employed 60 teachers, as well as a team of specialists to address specific student needs. An executive committee was in place to assist the principal in making decisions and implementing projects aimed at helping the students to achieve academic excellence. Parents participated in school-organized community activities, especially the monthly assemblies at which the school delivered information on school management and student performance. The Parents' Association participated at these assemblies through a delegate that had a seat on the School Council, proposing and debating alternatives related to the curricular and non-curricular goals proposed by the school.

Everything about the monthly meeting of the Parents' Assembly, the fourth one this year, had gone more or less as planned, with Ernesto delivering a report on the school's results for the previous year's SIMCE, the test by which the Chilean Education Ministry evaluates student performance. Ernesto had been principal at this private school for 15 years and was particularly proud of the school's academic record during his tenure. Solid scores had been maintained in math and language, placing the school above average for its socioeconomic bracket.

At the meeting, Ernesto reminded the parents about how important it was to give their kids consistent, continued support in their studies:

*"It is really important for you, as parents, to stress reading and to take advantage of school resources such as the library, and to talk to your kids and listen to their needs."*

Just as the meeting was coming to an end, the president of the Parents' Association, Juan Cortés, raised his hand. Turning to the principal, he asked:

*"What is the school's position regarding the secondary school students' decision not to attend class during the student protest planned for next Thursday, as they did at the protests last week?"*

Ernesto could feel the eyes of every mother and father there staring at him; the atmosphere was silent, expectant. Doing his very best to summon his authority as school principal, Ernesto calmly replied,

*“I do not agree with the protest march, and much less with the idea of our students missing class to participate in it, given that they not only miss out on learning opportunities, but they risk their physical safety by doing so. For this reason, when the students asked for our permission to take part in the nationwide protest march, we said no. I want you to know that we considered this matter with great care and it was only after a great deal of reflection that we came to this decision. As school policy, we do not support students’ absence from class. We do however, believe that the students have legitimate reasons for protesting.” He paused and then closed by saying, “I want you all to be assured that we are carefully monitoring this situation.”*

As soon as the words came out of his mouth, he flashed back to a recent conversation with his son, Camilo, a university student and alumnus of Ernesto’s school. Camilo had made it very clear to his father that he supported the right of all Chileans to quality public education and, as such, supported the nationwide student protest march that the secondary school and university student associations had organized.

*“Dad, I’m going on strike. The student assembly voted in favor of the strike, and I am basically in agreement with the demands...but don’t worry, nothing’s going to happen at your school—as usual.”*

This conversation, the recent events at the school, and now the concern raised by the Parents’ Association had left Ernesto feeling increasingly uncomfortable, uneasy. He tried hard to recall other occasions in which his students had taken a stand on other issues, and he had to acknowledge that he had never allowed the students at the school to participate in these types of events. He also thought back to his own university years and his refusal to participate in any type of protest that might jeopardize the efforts his own family had made to put him through college, efforts that had allowed him to become the family’s first college graduate.

With all these thoughts racing through his mind, Ernesto suddenly felt the need to talk things over with his son again. He called Camilo on his cell phone, to find out what time he’d be coming home that weekend. The answer, however, was not what he hoped.

*“I can’t come home, Dad, we have student assembly,” he said, and added, “I suppose at your school things are business as usual? Tough luck for those kids, sounds like they’ll have to wait until after graduation to make themselves heard.”*

Ernesto could feel the disappointment in his son’s voice, and didn’t know what to say. He answered meekly:

*“We’ll see. Hope to see you and talk sometime soon.”*

That weekend was a strange one for Ernesto. He was distracted; all he could think about was this dilemma that had him so stumped: he wondered what to do with the students and their constant demands to protest. What would he do if they participated despite his policy? What he would say to the parents if this happened? His wife noticed that something odd was going on with him and, concerned, asked if he was feeling okay.

*“I’m fine, don’t worry.” he lied. “I’m just a little tired, that’s all.”*

### **More conversations, more information**

First thing Monday morning, Ernesto called in Germán, the school’s history teacher, to talk to him about the dilemma he was facing. Specifically he needed to talk about the question posed by the parents’ association president. Germán, who was the adviser to the Students’ Association, was known for his academic leadership, and Ernesto turned to him because he knew that at the next meeting he would need to give the parents some very emphatic and decisive answers.

Speaking to Germán very deliberately, he said,

*“I’m sure you understand that for me, as the person responsible for the entire school, this is a very complex situation, since we cannot risk the school’s reputation, and we have to make sure that the students’ families do not become uncomfortable or angry with us. In addition, if anything happens to our students, I am the one responsible for their safety.”*

Germán listened attentively and then offered a description, from his perspective, of how things had come to pass:

*“Listen, it was during one of my classes with the 12th grade students that the issue of the student protests came up. You and I both know the impact that those marches had, in the city and all across the country. In that context, I told them that it is our civic obligation to express our opinions. But honestly, Ernesto, it was not my intention to encourage them to boycott coming to class.”*

Germán added that he couldn’t take responsibility for a decision the students made, but softened the blow by saying,

*“Listen, it’s not such a big deal. After all, the students only boycotted classes, which was a peaceful way of allying themselves with the movement.” Germán looked Ernesto in the eye and then, in a challenging tone of voice, reminded him: “Or do you not agree with one of the objectives that is clearly stated in the school’s educational mission, that it is the school’s role to ‘develop critical*

*thinking?’ In that sense, Ernesto, neither the students nor I have done anything wrong. Moreover, though this issue did come up at the Students’ Association, I am not sure that those students were the ones urging the others to boycott classes.”*

Germán’s position was clear. As advisor to the Students’ Association he believed that the school ought to create spaces for the students to express their opinions with regard to the student movement that was taking place in Chile. But Ernesto just wasn’t sure if that stance was a feasible one for the school.

### **Protests at the door to the school**

Throughout the city, several secondary schools joined the protests and the marches became an almost everyday event. One of the caravans planted itself directly in front of Ernesto’s school while the students were attending classes, which at the time were still functioning normally. The screams from outside, of protesters exhorting the students to join the marches, grew more insistent and intense when the students went outside for recess. Some students in the older grades asked permission to join the march, but Ernesto denied all requests, which created an atmosphere of tension both in and out of the school.

After several days of protests, the head teachers of each grade, along with members of the Students’ Association, met with Ernesto in the hope of reaching a consensus on how the students might protest and express their dissent. As they discussed the issue, they ruled out the idea of occupying the school, but they did demand that Ernesto state publicly his position regarding the Chilean students’ rights to have access to quality higher education that would be free of cost to those unable to afford it.

Ernesto was in a tight spot. He truly believed that one of the most important challenges for students in the 21st century was to develop critical thinking and the ability to express their beliefs. If this wasn’t an opportunity for them to do that, what was? Once more, the words of his son reverberated in his ears: “Don’t worry, nothing’s going to happen at your school—as usual.”

Shortly before his next monthly assembly with the parents, Ernesto brought up the issue at the Executive Committee meeting, where he listened to a number of differing opinions on the previous month’s student protests and the most recent state of affairs. Opinions varied: some people wanted to support the protests with information sessions and gatherings for discussion and reflection, while others wanted to join the students marching and take to the streets the next time a protest was planned. This, they felt, would allow the young people to take part in the popular demand for equity and social justice.

Ernesto still couldn’t decide what position to take. What was he going to do?

**Questions for reflection**

1. What would you do if you were in Ernesto's position?
2. Do you think this case is a lesson in civic responsibility?
3. As principal, what kind of leadership would you demonstrate with the students?
4. What actions would you have taken as a teacher in response to the students' concerns?
5. What stance would you adopt with the parents in order to position the leadership focus that the school wishes to offer its students?
6. Is Ernesto's attitude toward his students consistent, knowing his son's position?

## **CULTURAL INTEGRATION: A CHALLENGE INSIDE THE CLASSROOM**

In 2012, Juan accepted a job as Academic Coordinator at a vocational-technical school for grades 7 to 12 in the center of Santiago. This experience would be substantially different from all of Juan's previous teaching jobs in that 28% of the students at this school were from Perú.

When Juan arrived at the school, the atmosphere was one of uncertainty: both the matriculation rate and academic results were not optimal, with low scores on the nationwide standardized tests and very disappointing qualifying test scores for college admissions.

### **A first impression**

On his first day at work, Juan focused on observing the various educational processes taking place at the school, in order to reach his own conclusions about what was going on in terms of general administration, curricular management, academic life, and resource allocation, as well as other areas.

One thing that caught his eye was the monthly assembly held to commemorate certain important historical dates on the calendar. To this end, each teacher would prepare a small gesture or reflection for the assembly. In the month of May, however, the celebratory event was the Naval Battle of Iquique, which caused a certain degree of consternation among the students of Peruvian origin. The Battle of Iquique took place on 21 May 1879 in the context of the War of the Pacific between Perú and Chile, in the city of the same name in northern Chile. The battle ended when the Chilean ship *Esmeralda* sank and its captain, Arturo Prat Chacón, as well as a large number of his crew, died at the hands of the Peruvian forces on board the *Huáscar*, captained by Admiral Miguel Grau.

The assembly took place as planned, but Juan could see the Peruvian students exchange surprised looks when the teacher in charge read the story of what had happened during the naval battle. At the end of the assembly, one of the students approached Juan and asked,

*“Why isn't Miguel Grau described as a master strategist, a hero?”*

Juan stared blankly at the student, unable to come up with an answer. The question haunted him for some time after that.

A few weeks later, Juan noticed clusters of the Peruvian students forming in the halls and in a corner of the courtyard, making plans to watch a soccer game the following weekend, a classic South American

showdown: Perú versus Chile. When he realized what this was all about, Juan innocently inquired where the game was to be played, and the students all responded,

*“You don’t know?? In Lima, and we’re going to win, 4-nothing!” they cried jubilantly.*

They were right: Perú won the game, and the Peruvian students made this abundantly clear the morning after, when they showed up at school proudly wearing their Peruvian team T-shirts. Juan enthusiastically congratulated them, noticing all the while that the other students basically ignored them. He couldn’t help but feel terribly uncomfortable about the situation.

One of Juan’s many responsibilities was coordinating the students’ professional internships. When he began to assign internships to each of his students, he was shocked that some companies refused to accept Peruvians as interns, primarily because of their ethnic origins and their physical appearance, and without any regard for their academic and/or disciplinary merits. Wendy, a Peruvian student at the top of her class, was having a hard time understanding why a company located in one of the city’s wealthier districts had chosen to take on a Chilean student with a comparatively poor academic record. Wendy began to wonder what was the point of all her hard work and efforts. Didn’t she also have the right to an internship in the sales department of a prestigious company?

*“Sir, she doesn’t even know how to use a calculator but they took her anyway, just because she’s pretty and Chilean! Life is so unfair here in Chile!” stormed Wendy.*

*“Don’t worry, we’re going to find you a fine place for your internship,” Juan replied; it was the only thing he could think of to say to her.*

One cold winter morning, Juan entered one of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade math classrooms to carry out a routine teacher observation. Very quickly he realized that the Peruvian students barely interacted with their Chilean peers. The Peruvians sat on one side of the room and the Chileans on the other. He could see that Wendy was having trouble confronting both her classmates and the teacher. Juan walked over to her and, with concern, quietly asked her what was going on. Her eyes flashing with anger, Wendy blurted out,

*“They always treat us so badly, they’ve discriminated against us since the minute we arrived in Chile. It’s all their fault!”*

The bitterness and pain Wendy felt were all too evident. The other Peruvian students in the class suddenly fell silent and could only nod their heads in agreement. The Chilean students, on the other hand, seemed unfazed and unaware, and continued writing in their math workbooks. When Juan left the classroom, a deep silence penetrated the atmosphere.

Juan went into his office and poured himself a cup of coffee. He knew that bridging these two worlds, so seemingly different, would not be an easy task. He recalled a story he had heard one day in the teachers' lounge, about a Chilean parent that had taken his daughter out of the school because she had started dating a Peruvian boy. Because his daughter was the best student in her class, the father felt that this relationship would have dire consequences for her. As Juan recalled this situation, he quickly finished his coffee and spent some time responding to emails that had piled up in his inbox. As he did this, he suddenly decided to request a meeting with the principal of the school, Estrella. The meeting was set for the afternoon.

In Estrella's office, after exchanging greetings, Juan brought up the case of the Chilean girl who had left the school. Upon hearing this, the principal remarked, in a cold tone of voice, "You know, Juan, that 80% of the school's top academic results come from the Peruvian kids." She continued:

*"We've had these results for the last couple of years now. At the end-of-the-year award ceremonies, if you look closely, you'll see that most of the parents in the audience are Peruvian."*

For a long while, Juan mulled over the significance of her words, but he wasn't sure what she meant by them. Did the principal support the presence of Peruvian students in the school? Did she want the Peruvian students there only because of their good academic results?

After winter break, it was time for the July assembly. Carlos, a Chilean student, gave a speech about Flag Day within the context of the War of the Pacific, and he also spoke about Peruvian Independence Day, which was celebrated that same month. To commemorate the date, Juan and a group of Peruvian students organized a surprise for the community. At the end of the assembly, the Peruvian students rose and sang the Peruvian national anthem. They did so solemnly and with dignity, at first softly and then louder and clearer than ever. The Chilean students and teachers listened in silence, astonished.

At the end of the assembly, a Peruvian 12<sup>th</sup> grader named Jean-Pierre, clearly moved by the gesture, walked up to Juan and said to him:

*"Sir, I heard that you were the person who encouraged us to sing our national anthem. It's been four years since I have heard or sung my national anthem. Thank you so much."*

After the ceremony, Juan walked down the hall to his office, thinking about what had just happened. Suddenly, he heard loud voices coming from the teachers' lounge. Carlos, an art teacher and one of the most veteran members of the school staff, was making remarks about what he had just seen in assembly.

*“What happened at assembly was incredible. I never thought I would see the Peruvian students singing their national anthem and the Chilean students watching them with respect.”*

*“Live and learn, right?” answered Juan, walking into the lounge. “I thought that was a nice surprise, to see that our students are capable of treating their peers with respect—the kind of respect you don’t always see in the courtyard or in the classroom.”*

*“They’ve earned that respect in the classroom. This school has had many generations of excellent Peruvian students,” replied Roberto, a biology teacher.*

*“If this keeps up, the school’s going to fill up with Peruvians,” was an ironic remark made by Marcelo, a math teacher.*

*“That’s right—you shouldn’t worry, then, it means we’ll have work for a long time,” remarked Pamela, a Spanish teacher.*

Her words elicited a round of smiles among the teachers in the room.

And so the year came to a close. Nobody seemed at all surprised to see that the top students in each class were Peruvian. As always at the end-of-the-year ceremonies, there was a big turnout among the Peruvian families, who participated with respect. At the end of the day’s event, Alexis, one of the Peruvian students, approached Juan and said:

*“This vacation is going to be long; my friends and I have nowhere to hang out and it’s even going to be hard for us to put food on the table.”*

Juan hugged him affectionately, and couldn’t help but reflect on all that had come to pass that year. He decided that the next challenge for the school community would be an act of Chilean-Peruvian integration.

### **Time for decisions**

As the new academic year began, the management team reviewed the calendar, planning the different activities that would take place over the course of the school year. Juan decided to suggest that the school host a community encounter featuring different aspects of Peruvian culture.

*“Our school,” Juan said to his colleagues, “ought to make an effort to integrate the students and families from Perú. I’d like to propose the creation of our first Expo Perú, to help disseminate*

*and celebrate Peruvian culture at our school, as an opportunity to strengthen the educational community in general, and promote cultural integration both in and out of the classroom.”*

*“Would this just be just a cultural exhibition?” asked Estrella, the principal.*

Juan explained that it would be more ambitious than that.

*“No, no,” he said, “I’m thinking about something more ambitious than tacking up a few posters. We should try to be serious about this. Learning and integrating cultures should be the goal of our school.”*

*“What would the students do, exactly?” asked Marcela, the art teacher.*

Juan described his plan:

*“The Chilean and Peruvian students will have to work together to create, among other things, a display about Peruvian Independence Day, and they’ll have to work as a team to resolve whatever differences they have.”*

*“Who else do you see participating in the event?” asked the school owner.*

*“We’ll have to invite different representatives of the Peruvian community in Chile, so that our Peruvian students will feel acknowledged, and then also local media, authorities, and others,” replied Juan.*

Marcelo, the math teacher, voiced his skepticism yet again:

*“Nice idea Juan, but aren’t we a school about math, science, literature, the arts? This isn’t a cultural integration society! How is this going to improve our test scores? ” Growing more exasperated Marcelo turned to the school head and asked: “We receive Chilean taxpayers’ money. Don’t we have an obligation to be a Chilean school?”*

The staff members present turned to Estrella, the principal, to see her reaction. Estrella only smiled, indicating neither approval nor disapproval of Juan’s plan.

There were a great many questions running through Juan’s mind by now, but after so many months of dealing with the sensitive matter of inclusion and exclusion at the school, there was one thing he knew for sure: this activity would be a real learning experience for the entire school. It was an opportunity to bring true cultural integration to this Chilean school and its classrooms. But could he risk causing even more problems in the school—and for himself—by defending a position that was clearly a source of conflict?

**Questions for reflection**

1. Does it make sense for Juan to press for the Expo Perú?
2. Should the school principal intervene?
3. Should Juan have gotten the Peruvian students organized?
4. Do you think Juan might lose his job?
5. Do you think the Chilean students, parents and legal guardians are capable of rising to the occasion?
6. How might the Peruvian families react to this activity?

## TWO PERSPECTIVES

It was the year 2002, and Juan was happy with his work as a teacher at a small public school in an indigenous community. He was lucky to a very positive work environment and parents who were extremely involved with their children's' education. What most impressed him was the school community's interest in reclaiming the local cultural heritage. This interest was made evident through their traditional celebrations, in which the entire community participated: teachers, students, parents and neighbors. For Juan it was very meaningful to see how the community valued and preserved its cultural heritage and instilled this ancestral knowledge in the younger generations.

After five years working at this school, the local authorities transferred Juan to another public school, also within the indigenous community, for students from 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Thanks to his excellent professional record, he was appointed principal. 100% of the students were of indigenous ancestry, and many of the children lived with their grandparents or other family members because their parents had had to move to the city for work. The school building was a wooden construction with precarious foundations, and was not fit for the demands of a modern public school, but it was located in a beautiful valley with leafy trees and was surrounded by tall hills. Juan arrived at the school in spring.

### Celebrations

Juan's first day as principal at his new school coincided with the most important celebration of the local indigenous culture. Enthused by this important holiday, Juan assumed that the ritual here would be somewhat similar to the celebration held at his previous school.

Juan recalled that Alberto, the previous principal, had told him that if he had any questions about the day-to-day management of the school, he should not hesitate to call. Juan decided to take advantage of this offer and ask about the community's celebration.

*"Alberto, how are you?" he spoke into the receiver.*

*"Fine, thanks. How is everything going?"*

*"All right so far," he replied. "I'm calling to ask you about the indigenous celebration at school. Who is in charge of organizing these activities?"*

*“Well, you ought to speak to Roberto about that. He’s a parent and he has helped out with these celebrations in the past. I’m sure he’ll fill you in. Listen, I have to go now, I’m in a meeting. But I’ll send you Roberto’s information. See you soon and good luck,” said Alberto before he hung up.*

Juan began to have doubts. The organization of the event seemed rather unclear and with only a few days left until the celebration, he called Roberto as soon as possible. Roberto was a man of medium height, with a broad, robust build and a very helpful spirit. He was always willing to lend a hand and do his part at the school. He was also very proud to be an alumnus.

*“Roberto,” Juan said when he had him on the line, “How is this activity organized? I was told that you could get me up to speed.”*

Roberto explained that the celebration would take place on Thursday at ten in the morning. The plan was to start out with a public prayer ritual, for which he had contacted a local healer and her assistants. In addition, he and some other parents had organized an activity to share some of the community’s traditional food. Juan was surprised that the teachers at the school were not at all involved in the preparations, but he did not comment on it. Roberto kindly said goodbye, adding:

*“I am very pleased that you are in charge of the school.” And with that he left for the fields to work.*

### **Getting the community involved**

That same afternoon, Juan called the teachers to a meeting, to generate some suggestions that might help plan the other activities that would take place at the celebration. There were only four days left for the event and Juan thought that they, as teachers, should be involved.

*“Listen, everyone, on Thursday we have the indigenous celebration and I wanted to know what activities you have planned for your students after the prayer that Roberto is organizing.”*

*“Juan, I don’t know a thing about these kinds of celebrations, so I would like to request not to be involved in the planning,” answered Lucy, one of the teachers who had worked the longest at the school.*

*“But Lucy,” replied Juan, surprised. “You’re part of the staff and though you don’t belong to the indigenous community, you have experience here. You can help out, I’m sure you can pitch in somehow.”*

Lucy said nothing for a moment and then replied:

*“All right, but I’ll need someone to help me because I can’t do it alone.”*

*“We’ve never had a lot of support for these events; the parents who help out are always the same ones and the rest just show up when everything’s ready. Besides, over the years, I’ve gotten the feeling that the parents don’t feel very comfortable participating in this celebration,” added Pedro, who also had many years of experience in the school.*

This particular bit of input made Juan stop and wonder, but he decided to go on with the meeting. After a pause he said:

*“People, we have to change this attitude and encourage students and parents to commit to the kids’ education both in and out of the classroom. This is an excellent opportunity to do just that.”*

*“Juan, what do you have in mind for commemorating this event?” asked Viviana, the youngest teacher on staff.*

Juan stopped to think for a moment and answered:

*“Well, since it’s such an important celebration, ideally each grade should organize an activity. It could be a traditional dance, a song, a performance. This is also a good opportunity invite some local authorities, parents, too. What do you think?”*

After a few moments of silence, everyone agreed.

*“Fine, then, but we still haven’t established what each of us is doing,” said Claudia, a first grade teacher.*

*“I agree with you, Juan. Each teacher ought to organize something with his or her class,” said Luis, a teacher who had recently arrived at the school.*

*“I can make some holiday decorations, but I’ll need some help because I don’t know much about it,” responded Daniela, a new teacher and recent college graduate who had lived her entire life in the city.*

## **The big day**

The big day arrived. Juan was very anxious for everything to go well with this celebration because it would be his first public event as the school principal. With great anticipation and expectation, he arrived at the school early in the morning to help get things going. When Roberto saw him, he greeted him warmly and said:

*“Good morning, Juan! Listen, we have a problem, we have to pick up Rosa, the healer who will be performing the prayer ceremony. We need a car to bring her here.”*

*“I can go,” said Juan, “But will you come with me? I’m still not familiar with the roads here.”*

Together they went to pick her up. Rosa was short, had a small face and was dressed in her culture’s traditional clothing. When they got back, just in time, she began the ceremony with a prayer in her language in an improvised shrine at the schoolyard. A number local authorities were present, and everyone respectfully watched the ceremony. However, Juan noticed that many of the teachers and a number of parents did not actively participate—on the contrary, they watched at a distance, not getting involved. He was surprised because the children’s participation was also less than inspiring.

Juan saw things more clearly now: a number of parents and students seemed uninterested in celebrating their culture’s ancestry. To try to process what was going on, he called María into his office. María was a member of the administrative staff and had been at the school for fifteen years; she seemed to understand the culture of the school very well. When she arrived at his office, he said,

*“María, I want to talk to you because I need your opinion on something. The other day, the day of the celebration, I noticed that the community didn’t really participate much. Why do you think this happened?”*

*“Don Juan, I know the school tries to celebrate and preserve our people’s ancestral culture, but it creates sort of a special problem. Most of us belong to a religion that does not accept adoration of anything that is not our God,” María replied.*

Juan was surprised by her answer but felt he was now beginning to grasp the situation. The problem was that now he was very unsure about what to do. On the one hand, the Ministry of Education had passed Decree 280, which ordered schools in areas with significant indigenous populations to work on reclaiming their ancestral culture. On the other hand, most of the parents seemed opposed to this policy.

The next week the principal received a visit from Pedro, the father of one of the students. Shortly into the conversation, Pedro asked:

*“Juan, why do you teach our children about the language and customs of our ancestral culture? It isn’t going to do them any good. Wouldn’t it be better to reinforce other subjects that will be more useful to them in the future?”*

Juan told Pedro that according to government policy it was mandatory to teach the local language and customs in all schools where more than 20% of the students belonged to a particular ethnic group. Pedro sighed and said,

*“Well, it doesn’t make much sense to me.” He then said goodbye and thanked Juan for the meeting.*

The meeting made Juan even more uneasy than before, because it was an opinion that came directly from a school parent. This might well become a problem, and he would have to be the one to find a solution. In his effort to learn more about the community’s thoughts on the matter, Juan turned to Trinidad, a parent with a good deal of influence at the school because of her contribution to the school’s activities.

*“Trinidad,” he asked her one day, “What do you think about the policy of including ancestral culture in the classroom?”*

*“Listen,” Trinidad said, “I understand that for some of the parents, especially the older ones, it is very important that their children and grandchildren learn about their cultural background. But this is not as important for the new generations. Honestly, I’d rather the kids learn other subjects that will be more useful to them. You and I both know that more and more people are moving to the cities in search of a better life; here in the country there’s no future for these kids. If we want them to get ahead in life, we have to prepare them well... For a large group of parents and teachers it doesn’t make much sense for the school to teach about cultural heritage because it won’t help their kids’ academic achievement. It might even be an obstacle when the kids try to relate to other people who could discriminate against them.”*

Trinidad paused, looked the principal in the eye, and added:

*“Another important thing that you should know is that most of us belong to an evangelical church. We don’t believe in worshipping a god other than the one in the Bible. You can understand that, can’t you?”*

*“Of course I do, María told me. As a school, we are going to have to be careful with this topic, and be open to different ways of thinking, even if it takes us a while.”*

## **The surprise**

Two weeks later Juan received a letter from the district authorities indicating that he was to call parents to a special meeting, to inform them about the new government guidelines regarding the inclusion of cultural heritage in the classroom.

He called for the meeting the following week. In attendance were 56 out of 68 parents, a government employee, the school principal and the cultural heritage teacher. The meeting started with a standard greeting from Juan and a presentation from the government authorities. Fernando, a government worker with many years of experience who was well-versed in the matter, informed his audience:

*“The purpose of this meeting is to learn what you as parents think about how the school is doing regarding cultural heritage education. We’ll also be distributing a survey on some of the most relevant cultural subjects.”*

Fernando launched into his questions:

*Do you think it’s important to preserve your cultural heritage? Do you value your cultural heritage? How many of you speak your culture’s original language?*

The parents remained silent and Juan encouraged them to respond by saying:

*“It is very important for us, as a school, to know your opinion. As parents you are an active part of your kids’ education, and your opinion matters to us.”*

After a long pause one of the parents spoke up:

*“Nobody speaks our culture’s language at home any more. Our grandparents used to speak it, but that knowledge has gotten lost over time.”*

Luisa, a new parent at the school added:

*“I respect the work you do at this school, Juan, but I would also like my daughter to learn other subjects that might be more useful to her. I want my daughter to be able to go to Santiago to work at something different. I’d be thrilled if she could learn computers or English—that will be much more helpful to her when she needs to find a job. So, no, I can’t understand why you would want to increase the number of cultural heritage class hours!”*

The audience started whispering furiously, and Juan responded:

*“Luisa, at the last meeting I informed you that this increase in hours is due to a mandatory government policy based on international treaties regarding indigenous cultures.”*

After some more parents commented on the matter, Fernando distributed a survey that they would have to answer and return the next day. All the questions were directly related to the knowledge the parents had of their cultural heritage.

Early the next day, Juan sent an assistant to the classrooms to collect the surveys. To his surprise, of the 56 surveys handed out, only 10 were returned. Of those, only four parents completed the survey, while the remaining six were incomplete. Juan confessed to his assistant that perhaps the survey was not the best way to gather the information they needed. In spite of the principal's insistence, the parents had no interest in participating in this important task.

### **Questions for reflection**

1. How might Juan balance the different points of view in this case?
2. What role should teachers, parents and students have in making decisions in this type of situation?
3. What should Juan do? Why?
4. What role should the educational authorities (municipal and national) play in this kind of situation?
5. How might the school help the families to embrace their own culture?
6. Is it appropriate to encourage a community to cultivate acceptance of their ancestral culture?

## TRAINING FOR WORK AND TRAINING FOR LIFE

Sergio was a teacher with fifteen years' experience in vocational-technical schools. When offered the chance to be the principal of a vocational-technical high school specializing in aeronautics and administration, he jumped at the chance. This government-subsidized, non-denominational private school was located in an urban area with a highly disadvantaged local community. The school's student population was roughly 1,000 boys from 1<sup>st</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Its main objective was to offer students an academic and values-based education that would give them the skills they would need to find jobs and, hopefully, to improve their families' quality of life.

This new challenge was very motivating for Sergio, who did not hesitate to quit his old job and accept this offer. The school year was beginning and Sergio would have to exercise his leadership skills to improve results and get students to make real progress. The school had earned the respect of a wide variety of companies that routinely opted to hire their students as interns over those of other schools, which often put them on their way professionally. The school's prominence had increased in recent years, and it was reflected in the high volume of applicants for spots in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Most students entering the school did so specifically to study aeronautics, the industrial specialty that gave the school its prestige. In this sense, the school offered a very real opportunity for kids to improve the quality of life of the families in the community, most of which were highly disadvantaged, low income families with limited possibilities for professional or cultural improvement.

### The conflicts begin

After his first meetings with his staff and teachers, it began to dawn on Sergio that his job was going to be harder than he thought. Military discipline seemed to prevail over educational criteria, and he did not feel completely comfortable with the style of teaching at the school.

Sergio had called the staff to the first meeting of the year to organize their work and to get to know different details about the school's operations. During his first speech, he was interrupted by Carlos, the general inspector, who had been in his position for three years. From Carlos's firm tone of voice and dogmatic attitude, Sergio could tell that he was a man with a strict and authoritarian character.

*"Sergio, this school works like a clock. The discipline here is extraordinary thanks to the inspectors, who always know everything that goes on. The teachers, however, are too easy on the students."*

*We have to be hard on the kids; they need it and so do the teachers, because if you want things to work, you have to take charge and tell your subordinates what to do.”*

Carolina, who had been working for several years as the school’s vocational-technical coordinator, added:

*“I think that sometimes Carlos exaggerates with the discipline, but the approach does work on the students. Here the teachers work in peace, not like in other places where the students don’t let you get through class. This is how we have managed to improve the school year after year. Besides, the students we have here are very difficult, they come from harsh realities and if we don’t set clear limits with severity and discipline, it’s chaos.”*

Sergio clearly saw that discipline was a central force at the school and that, to date, it had been key to its success. In order to graduate as aircraft mechanics in the field of aeronautics, students needed to be reliable, conscientious, disciplined and capable of accomplishing tasks that required a high level of precision and responsibility. The school’s success filled its teachers with pride. But something made Sergio uneasy, and he continued probing his team and their criteria:

*“Carolina, do you think that the students’ education is good with this much discipline?”*

*“Excuse me sir,” interrupted Carlos in an emphatic voice. “I’ve always said that we have to use a firm hand if we want to teach our students to obey. Military discipline has gotten good results that way, and we’ve proven the same here!”*

Michelle, the head of the technical pedagogical unit, was also new at the school and agreed with Sergio’s ideas on education. Out of the corner of her eye, she looked at the principal and spoke up:

*“Listen, the idea is for us to establish methods that strengthen what you have already done up until now. We think that decisions have to be made through consensus among the different members of the school community. As long as we keep the lines of communication open, without undermining the different decisions made on behalf of the students, we feel we can establish a respectful work environment that will serve as a model for our students.”*

As the meeting continued, Sergio saw that the team’s opinions were divided. One group believed in a strict, discipline-oriented approach to education, while the other thought that education should be based on encouraging critical thinking and dialogue between students and teachers.

Sergio knew that this school functioned according to strict discipline, both for students and teachers. Everyone went along with it because this method had allowed the school to accomplish many things and had developed very effective processes. The school’s academic results were within the national

average, and its students enjoyed a calm, organized classroom environment. Overall, the school had become a model, an example for the neighborhood and a real opportunity for the students' work and economic expectations.

Carlos, the general inspector and chief of the aeronautics department, had been key to establishing these aspects of the school, and he felt proud of his achievements. His work had given the school prestige in the municipality, which was very important in order to promote the school and fill the registration quotas. The graduates of the school were well received by companies in the sector and acknowledged for their superb work.

### **A difficult understanding**

Sergio often walked through the halls of the school in the morning, and on one of these routine rounds he encountered Tomás, the history teacher, complaining in a loud voice as he walked by:

*“Why doesn’t anyone stop this man? He does whatever he wants with the students and teachers. He thinks he’s still in the military!”*

Concerned, Sergio approached Tomás and asked him why he was so upset.

*“It happened again, Sergio. Carlos insists on walking into my classroom unannounced, yells at the students and hands out demerits. Not only does he interrupt my class, he undermines my authority as a teacher and ruins the kids’ concentration.”*

Inés, the math teacher, who happened to be walking by, remarked:

*“This is very typical behavior for Carlos. But you know, there are teachers who do ask him to intervene in their classes and discipline their kids, and I think they are at least partly responsible for this.”*

Tomás had been at the school for several years and was one of the teachers who disagreed with the military discipline that prevailed. He liked to work with the students on creative group activities, which made his classes—in the eyes of the inspector—more disorganized. On a few occasions he had had to resolve some problems that had sprung up between his students. In spite of his friendly nature, Tomás did not hesitate to express his displeasure and sent Sergio a written complaint about Carlos's violent interruption of his class. He expected to receive an explanation because he considered it a serious offense that undermined his authority with the kids. In his complaint, Tomás asked for an explanation and an apology from Carlos.

Sergio decided to act immediately, attack the problem head-on and, hopefully, avoid more conflicts like this in the future. He wanted to resolve things without eliciting an outburst from Carlos, so he called him in to his office to talk one-on-one. After the usual greetings he asked the inspector:

*“Carlos, I wanted to know if you have had any problems with anyone this week at school.”*

*“Just a few minor issues,” the inspector answered tersely.*

As usual, Sergio complimented the inspector and mentioned of all his good work. Then, he gently expressed his concern regarding the incident with the history teacher. Carlos, in a firm and sarcastic tone of voice, retorted:

*“Once again Tomás is making up stories. Don’t listen to him, it’s nothing, Sergio!”*

Sergio, a bit uneasy, read Tomás’ complaint out loud. Before he could finish, the inspector interrupted him:

*“Sergio, if you are doubting my word I’ll put an end to this conversation right now. I will not allow you to question me. At this school we have to teach the students to obey and respect their superiors, and until now I have had good results. My kids are always at the top of their class, just ask the bosses and supervisors at the airline; they take my students because they are an example of efficient, professional work.”*

*“That’s not what this is about, Carlos. I need to know your side of the story and that’s why I called you here,” Sergio answered politely.*

*“Sergio, I have no other choice right now but to tender my resignation. I quit. It is clear to me that you are questioning my word. I can see that this school is changing, for the worse, and I think it’s an outrage. I have been working here for years, I have achieved a great deal with military rigor and discipline, and now you don’t want to hear of it. I deserve respect,” the inspector concluded.*

Shocked, Sergio watched as the inspector grabbed his briefcase and walked out of the school. He could not understand Carlos’s reaction. And Sergio now knew for sure that if he wanted to accomplish the goals the school had set out for him as principal, there would be many obstacles to overcome in the process.

Michelle now entered Sergio’s office, and immediately picked up on his stress. He told her everything that had just happened, to which Michelle answered:

*“Excuse me Sergio, but I don’t think that this strict, inflexible discipline is an effective way to educate our students. At this school behavior modification and punishment are very clearly used*

*strategically, with both students and teachers, and I think it's excessive. Our job is to help the students develop different abilities and that is a long-term job. We've been asked to improve their learning skills and I doubt that discipline is the way."*

Sergio completely agreed with Michelle but he also thought that Carlos's job shouldn't be taken lightly, especially considering the background of the students at the school.

Just then, Sergio's secretary alerted him that Mr. Aliaga, the school owner, had arrived. Without saying hello, Mr. Aliaga barged into the office and confronted Sergio:

*"Sergio, can you please explain to me why the school inspector quit? I can't believe you let this happen! He is an exemplary professional, he keeps the school in order, just how I like it."*

*"Mr. Aliaga, it was impossible to talk to Carlos after his argument with the history teacher. He just impulsively stormed out of my office announcing that he quit," Sergio responded.*

It was only his first week and Sergio already saw that this job would be a constant struggle. He knew that his decision-making and his beliefs would be put to the test at every turn. He also saw that before he could implement his own ideas and teaching projects, aimed at improving the kids' grades and test scores, he would have to deal with issues of trust and confidence among his staff. He was torn. The words of Michelle, the technical chief, made him feel that they could do more than just deal with everyday difficulties, but the owner's words echoed unpleasantly in his mind:

*"Look Sergio, I don't know how you're going to do it, but Carlos has to be at his job tomorrow. The school will never be the same without his kind of discipline," Mr. Aliaga stated categorically.*

Suddenly, the bell rang signaling the end of the school day. It had been a very difficult first week for Sergio and he knew that the following weeks would bring him even more dilemmas, as well as some hard decisions.

**Questions for reflection**

1. What would you do in Sergio's place?
2. What aspects of the students' education should the principal prioritize in order to reach the school's goals?
3. Would it be advisable for the principal to change the school's current disciplinary system for one more open to dialogue and participation, as Michelle suggested?
4. How should the principal resolve the confidence and interpersonal issues that have arisen with the general inspector?
5. After hearing the owner's mandate, what should the principal do about the general inspector? What can he do?
6. Given the mandate from the school's owner about Carlos, how do you think the principal might try to implement some of his ideas about the kind of education imparted at the school?
7. Is it possible to balance discipline with participation? If so, how?

## THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL: WHAT ARE THE LIMITS?

Iván was a science teacher and technical coordinator at a school run by a Catholic congregation. With students from preschoolers to 12<sup>th</sup> graders, the school's most important objective was that of helping students develop academically and as human beings, with an emphasis on respect for others, human values and the Catholic doctrine. Iván believed in these principles, but he also felt it was important to improve his students' academic results.

A relatively young man of medium height, Iván was thin with light brown hair and was quite formal in his choice of clothing. That morning, as he left the school chapel after a few long minutes of meditation, he breathed in the salty sea air. The expression on his face was calm, and he walked with a decisive, firm step. It seemed he had found the answer he had so anxiously been searching for.

That morning, he recalled with clarity the events of a few months earlier, while he had been filling out some documents required by the Ministry of Education. He had been analyzing the academic results of the students who had just finished the school year when Nachy, the school secretary, had stuck her head into his office.

*"Iván, someone from Santiago is on the phone; she insists that she needs to speak with you," she announced.*

After a few seconds' thought, Iván replied:

*"Please tell whomever it is that I'm busy right now, but that if she calls back in the afternoon, I can speak."*

### The offer

As he went home, Iván wondered about the call. Walking into his house, he greeted his wife and daughters, who were waiting for him, and his thoughts moved on to more domestic occupations. He spent the remainder of the day with his family, playing with his daughters until it was time to go to sleep. That night he slept well, and the next day he felt extremely well-rested and energetic.

*"See you at lunch," he said to his family as he waved goodbye and headed off to work.*

When he got to school, he said good morning to the security guard, the nuns, and the teachers and then went to his office, ready to finish up what he had started the day before. He had barely gotten

comfortable in his chair when Nachy once again alerted him of an incoming call. For some reason he began to feel nervous as he took the call and listened to the voice at the other end of the line.

*“Good morning, am I speaking with Iván?”*

*“Yes, that’s right. How can I help you?” he replied.*

*“Iván, we’ve been trying to get hold of you for several days now,” a woman’s voice responded.*

*“We’d like to talk to you...”*

Intrigued, Iván continued listening.

*“We’d like to make you an important job offer, Iván. But we’d like you to come to Santiago as soon as possible to discuss it in person,” the voice said.*

*“Well, I have time tomorrow afternoon,” Iván replied, and jotted down the address.*

The next day, all day long Iván was fidgety, thinking about the job offer. He wondered if it would be something challenging or innovative, things that always motivated him professionally.

When he arrived at the address he’d been given, he got out of the taxi, walked inside, and was directed to an office. He knocked on the door and a secretary told him that a woman named Cristina would receive him momentarily.

Suddenly, a door opened onto a spacious office, and a middle-aged woman greeted him and ushered him inside.

*“Iván, we have excellent references about your work, and we would like to make you an offer,” she said in a warm tone of voice.*

He wondered who had given this woman a reference for him. Cristina continued talking.

*“Iván, I’m the president of the board of directors of an important educational foundation. I represent one of the wealthiest families in the corporate sector here in Chile. This family has made a commitment to give something back to the community through education. We have two large schools and we want you to run one of them starting next year. We’d like to offer you the job of school principal.”*

Iván was surprised and flattered by this very important offer. But he wanted details, as many as possible, about this new challenge, and began asking questions. Only after two hours did the meeting finally come to a close. Before Iván could get up from his chair, however, Cristina said one more thing:

*“You know, you’ve asked me about nearly everything, except perhaps the most important thing of all,” she said. “Your salary!” And she began to laugh.*

Iván said nothing, for he had yet to process all the information he’d just learned. Finally, as they were saying goodbye, he asked her and Cristina replied:

*“It would be double what you are earning now.”*

Iván thanked her, said goodbye, and left the office. Only once he was back out on the street did his head begin to pound with many more questions.

### **The decision**

The school that Iván had been invited to run was located in a coastal city some 120 kilometers from where he presently lived. He would have to move; there was no way he could commute that distance every day. What would his wife say? How would the nun who was the head of his present school feel? Would it be hard to find a new house?

Despite all the unanswered questions, he was very intrigued by the idea of such a fascinating professional challenge. He felt he had the technical expertise to do a good job, and of course the salary would significantly alleviate his financial needs and even enable him to treat his family to a few luxuries.

The new school had an impressive infrastructure: high quality constructions, ample classrooms painted in warm colors, school furniture that was practically new, well-tended courtyards and gardens, a spacious and pristine lunchroom...everything in its place. The entire campus was kept spotlessly clean, with cleaning and maintenance crews on duty at all hours.

The educational project was quite clear, too: the school was aimed at addressing the needs of at-risk children who were very disadvantaged socioeconomically. Most of the students were from unstable homes with alcohol and drug problems as well as a high rate of teen pregnancy. There were about 800 kids enrolled in the school, which was located in the outskirts of the city. All told, approximately 70% of the students were deemed to be at-risk.

The school’s academic objectives were focused on turning out graduates with a first-rate vocational-technical high school diploma to facilitate their entry into the job market. The school also identified itself as a Catholic institution, in which the children were to be educated according to the values of faith and the Christian doctrine, encouraging the integration of the family.

Iván was grateful for this opportunity. He took the job. The school combined academic excellence with the cultivation of faith-based values, and was focused on a student population with very acute needs. This coincided with his own belief that if children were given the right educational environment in which to grow, addressing their most basic needs first, they would have the opportunity to learn, make progress, continue on to higher education, gain access to good jobs, and break free from the cycle of poverty in which their families existed.

### **The first months**

In order to ensure that all his students made good progress, Iván knew that his management had to focus on what was happening inside the classroom and deliver a values-based education supported by the Catholic doctrine. Striking the right balance between reason and faith would be his great challenge.

A few months later, he received a call from Cristina, who wanted to know how his work was going. Iván gave her a detailed report about the difficulties he had experienced as well as the progress made, the adaptations implemented, and his successful optimization of certain procedures. He also told her how much he valued the teamwork that he had achieved with the teachers. He had successfully begun to incorporate technology into the classroom, and the students were now participating more actively in the construction of their own learning processes.

Cristina congratulated him on his work, and also told him that she was aware of all that he had done. She then mentioned that the manager of the Technical Education Unit would be visiting him the following week for some on-site supervision of the progress of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in their respective areas of specialization. The other objective of the visit was to establish each student's professional internship plan, which was the final phase that all students had to go through before they could receive their vocational-technical certification.

The next day, the principal noticed that Jeannette, the school general manager, was more careful than usual about her administrative tasks and in ensuring that all the support departments, including the maintenance and cleaning staffs, were functioning perfectly. Jeannette was the person with whom Iván had the most constant contact on a day-to-day basis, and he knew that she was constantly issuing reports on the state of the school for the areas under her supervision. He also knew that her two sons were students at the school and were beneficiaries of the Foundation.

Jeannette was good at her job; she was quite capable of managing the service staff, though she was less agile with the teachers. At times she could be a close confidante, while on other occasions she seemed remote, distant. She had been working at the school since its doors had opened.

A few weeks later, when Aurora, the manager of the Technical Education Unit, arrived at the school, Iván went out to greet her, and together they went into his office to talk. Aurora observed him closely, looked at how well his desk was organized, gazed around the office, and then asked him:

*“So, how have you felt here?”*

Iván responded that he was quite happy at the school, very enthusiastic about the work that everyone was doing, and that he valued very much what the Foundation did for the kids. He also added that he fully supported the academic and non-academic precepts that guided the school. Aurora smiled; this last remark seemed to please her.

Aurora was a woman with a pleasant, energetic disposition. She was a member of the Foundation’s board of directors, and was very clear about the school’s objectives.

Together she and Iván visited some classrooms, focusing especially on the students who were in their last year at the school. Iván couldn’t help but notice that Aurora paid special attention to the students who stood out as stars among their classmates; she was particularly interested in those who demonstrated they could tackle more advanced academic subjects and who, moreover, often served as tutors to students who were struggling. Among these especially gifted students was Benjamín, one of Jeannette’s sons.

Around midday, Aurora left the school to have lunch with some well-known local businessmen. She would return a few hours later to work with Iván on the students’ internship plans.

Iván felt especially content: he was doing a good job, he liked this new school, he was getting paid well, he worked with kids who needed help, and in general he felt that he truly shared the school’s values.

When Aurora returned, they had a brief meeting in Iván’s office over a cup of coffee and then went out to one of the courtyards. They walked around a bit, and then idly stopped on the esplanade just outside the chapel. There, Aurora turned to Iván, looked him in the eye and said:

*“Iván, we’re going to register the students to do their technical internships at some of the local businesses. Many of the businessmen here are people my father knows well, and they would be happy to receive our students as interns. This way, once they graduate, they will be able to get jobs at these places.”*

*“That’s fine,” said Iván, but there was something else he wanted to discuss with her:*

*“Aurora,” he said, “A good number of the kids here have demonstrated that they have the grades and the ability to pursue professional degree programs at regular universities. I believe many of them would do quite well, in fact, and I think it’s important for us to support and guide them in that direction. They have what it takes to become successful professionals, to hold executive positions wherever they choose, and to help their families break out of the cycle of poverty—all of which, of course, is because of the opportunities they’ve had as students here in the Foundation’s school.”*

Aurora listened closely to what Iván said, but her face grew somber, and she replied,

*“Iván, I ought to remind you that our mission here is to educate the children and give them an unparalleled vocational-technical education which will allow them to become successful and productive members of the work force. Our objectives do not include making additional efforts to help them pursue university degrees. I should also remind you that you yourself stated your full and total commitment to and respect for that mission, which we made very clear to you.”*

She continued:

*“Iván... don’t forget, for these students a technical degree represents real success—and that success is made even more meaningful by the fact that they will be able to get jobs at local companies as soon as they graduate.”*

*“Aurora,” Iván rebutted, “Our school educates at-risk kids. We give them the chance to receive a quality education—why on earth wouldn’t we support the most capable students so that they can go on to college, to study toward professional degrees that will allow them to have much more interesting and better-paid jobs?”*

*“Iván, I’ll say it again. You are very familiar by now with our educational principles, and you know how important it is to the Foundation that you uphold this set of values,” replied Aurora.*

Iván looked down at the ground for a few seconds, and then he looked up again and gazed directly into Aurora’s green eyes.

*“I am convinced,” he said, “that these talented young people deserve a shot at going to college...”*

Aurora repeated what she said about the school’s stated mission. Then she said a frosty goodbye to Iván, and turned to leave. The last thing she said to him was:

*“I’ll give you a call in a few days.”*

Iván thought about what had just been said. It was true, the school gave excellent opportunities to children in extremely disadvantaged situations. He knew that the school's goal was to give these young people a solid technical degree. Yet as an educator and mentor he couldn't help but notice that some of his students were perfectly capable of becoming successful, college-educated professionals. But they could only do so with the school's support and guidance.

**Questions for reflection**

1. What is the role of the school's mission? Are there limits to this values system?
2. Should the principal's leadership always be beholden to the school's educational plan?
3. Is it wise to encourage talented but disadvantaged students at technical high schools to invest more time in prolonging their education, even if this means placing the financial needs of their families as a second priority?
4. At what moment can the school safely say that its educational mission has been fulfilled?
5. Would you consider 'successful' an educational institution that responds to specific job needs in the surrounding community?

## **Working with Multiple Stakeholders Including Boards**

## CONFLICTING APPROACHES

Francisco was chief of the Technical Pedagogical Unit at a coeducational government-subsidized private school in a working-class neighborhood in a city in southern Chile. The school, with over 1,000 students from preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, had a scientific-humanist orientation and boasted a school wide integration project for students with special education needs and a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The school's institutional mission was to offer a superior education based on values, civility, and inclusion, and the school made a point of encouraging the development and improvement of each student's potential in the interest of cultivating a balance that would help the student strive for truth and goodness, and feel motivated to achieve goals.

In this context, Francisco worked side by side with the teachers in his role overseeing curricular management and ensuring compliance with the school's educational program.

One morning, Rita, a first grade teacher with a great deal of experience at the school, entered Francisco's office. In the school community she was known for her tremendous professional commitment, responsibility and academic skills. She was also well known for her depth of experience as a teacher, especially in first grade. Her positive interaction with her students had brought her success as a teacher and had also earned her many awards.

### The situation in first grade

Anxiously, and with a quivering voice Rita said:

*"We are already at the beginning of May, and I have spent a lot of time preparing but I just don't know what to do. I can't make progress in my class, the kids are easily distracted, they have a hard time keeping up, they get bored and lose focus. I spend too much time disciplining them. They have no study habits, and yet the parents complain that they have too much homework. The problem is that whatever work they can't finish in class, they have to do at home. I am completely overwhelmed. These kids don't follow rules, they don't follow instructions, and I have to nag them all the time to do their school work."*

Almost crying, Rita added:

*"Out of 45 students, I have eight that didn't meet the mandatory age as of March 31<sup>st</sup>, and I suspect that they lack the cognitive development needed for first grade. Then, I have five students*

*from the School Integration Project; seven who have been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder and other disorders, which implies a much greater burden than normal for me. Many of the students, though diagnosed, don't receive specific support for their needs because the project has a maximum limit of five students. There is a special ed teacher that comes to the classroom and tries to help, but the quality of the support is mediocre because there are so many needs.*

*"My greatest problem is that because of this, the other kids in the class are lagging. I know that it's my job to push through and that I shouldn't ask for a teaching assistant, but I need more support in my classroom. Helping the kids form study habits and controlling discipline are essential if they are to learn at all. This is a difficult class, it's so hard to calm them down and create an environment for learning."*

Francisco listened to what she said and told her that he would do his best to address her concerns. He urged Rita to continue working, to give her best, and told her that he would ask the special education teacher for more support, to establish some strategies that might help. Regarding the request to have a teaching assistant in the classroom, he said:

*"I will speak to the owner of the school; but you know that hiring a teaching assistant is a financial decision. But I understand your situation."*

Francisco was very concerned with Rita's situation because other teachers had brought up this issue before. He was convinced that there were many factors that had an impact on a student's learning process, and he knew that a key factor in getting kids to learn in first grade was a certain level of maturity that was needed for the formation and development of reading, writing and math skills. He also knew how important it was for the kids to have mastered certain social skills that would allow them to follow rules, respect taking turns and master other aspects necessary for the successful completion of the requirements at this formative level.

## **The request**

At the school management team meeting the following week, Francisco brought up the issue. He explained that the problem was related to the admissions policies established in the General Education Law, which explicitly stated the requirements for entering first grade. To enter first grade, a child must have completed his or her 6<sup>th</sup> birthday by March 31<sup>st</sup> of the corresponding year. The principal at each school has the authority to extend that date to June 30<sup>th</sup>, though only in justified cases.

Francisco explained the official information to the team and then went into detail about Rita's specific issue. He emphatically raised his concern about having accepted so many students that did not meet the required age by March 31<sup>st</sup>. He then convincingly conveyed the teacher's request to hire a teaching assistant for the first grade class. To emphasize his request, he observed that many students had not taken a maturity test because the only criterion used for their acceptance was the need to fill the quota for that grade. Francisco pointed out that the principal was aware of this situation. For her it was important to ensure the economic stability of the school's educational project.

The days went by, and the problem didn't go away. The first grade parents requested a meeting with Rita. They reiterated the urgent need to hire a teaching assistant to help their children. The parents were very concerned with the slow progress in class, the amount of homework and the lack of notebook review. Given this new scenario, Rita once again met with Francisco to inform him about the meeting with the parents and the pressure that they were putting on her to solve the problem. He decided to speak directly with the school's owner to inform her of what was going on. After presenting the case he received the following answer:

*"Our teachers must be prepared for the diversity of students in the classroom; that's what they studied teaching for, isn't it? The law does not require us to have teaching assistants in first grade and our resources are very limited. Our only option is to look for a student intern. If our academic results were better, we would have more enrolled students and wouldn't need to fill the quota. And finally, we are in accordance with what the law requires. This school has always met the requirements of the law."*

It was clear that these were two diametrically opposed views. One had to do with the need to fill the quota in order to receive financing, and the other was related to a teaching aide and a concern for the students to learn appropriately.

### **Striking a balance**

After the meeting, Francisco returned to his office very upset and disappointed. He sat in front of his computer and asked himself how he was going to achieve a balance between these two positions. He was aware that the students needed support in order to meet their academic goals. He was also concerned about the parents and guardians: he needed to respond to their concerns about their children's education. What would happen when the teachers grew tired of trying to support their students' progress?

Francisco also couldn't help but think of the students that possessed the basic skills needed to face new challenges with regard to attitude, cognition and new procedures but were not learning what they needed. He knew that the classroom was not providing the appropriate learning environment and that they were not covering the basic curricular learning standards that the Ministry of Education required. In other words, he felt that his students' educational rights were not being respected.

Francisco knew that holding a position of leadership at a school meant having to play a strategic role in bringing out the teachers' abilities through team work, and in establishing common goals to motivate the school community to continually strive for more. He also felt a personal responsibility to leave his mark, hopefully a positive one, on the school community. He wanted to help make progress in the kids' formative process and establish the bonds of trust needed to move forward together.

For this reason, he asked himself: what decision would a true educational leader make in this situation? What were the obligations of an educational institution? How did the concepts of inclusion, equity and opportunity fit in here? Might it be necessary to look at this from an outsider's perspective in order to understand better all the possible points of view to take into account here?

### **Questions for reflection**

1. How might the school balance its economic goals and remain a worthy educational institution?
2. What is the real problem here?
3. What strategies might Rita introduce in order to solve the problem in the classroom?
4. Would hiring a teaching assistant solve the problems they are facing?

## THE SOUND OF A BELL

Los Maitenes was a private, non-denominational school in a small town in the center of Chile, with a coed student population of about 400 from preschool to high school. With one class per grade and about 25 students per class, the school had earned a good reputation over the past 15 years thanks to the students' high scores on nationwide standardized tests. Quite significantly, 100% of the school's graduates went to college. Many teachers had come to live in the area specifically to work at the school, while others traveled weekly to work there. The teachers had achieved a certain degree of autonomy over the years, which they valued and attributed to their students' academic results as well as their own hard work.

The physical space of the school was divided into two distinct areas, with preschoolers and elementary schoolers in one building and high school students in another. The school administration had one staff member working as the coordinator of the preschool and elementary school, because the school administration and the principal's offices were in the high school building. The supervisor's role was to ensure that the everyday operations in her area ran smoothly, and she was also responsible for overseeing the general atmosphere and environment of her area. The teachers in both areas understood the functions of the coordinator, and they also knew that she was supposed to support them in handling complex situations that might arise with students and parents.

The school year was divided into trimesters, and each trimester the principal held a progress evaluation council that all the teachers were required to attend. The purpose of this meeting was to keep tabs on the progress being made in different areas of the school, and to address problems by establishing improvement plans where needed.

### **Carmen and Antonia**

Carmen, the preschool and elementary school coordinator, was in her car, heading for her son's doctor's office. It had taken her a month to secure an appointment, and it would take her close to two hours to get there. She knew the council meeting that afternoon was essential for getting the trimester on track, and she also knew that her presence was truly needed, and so she felt guilty about not being there. As she drove down the highway, she thought about the teachers in her group, about how they had seemed rather distant recently. The meeting that day probably would have been a perfect opportunity to see if this inkling was actually based on anything real. But as soon as she had been told that an appointment

was available for her son, she went to Antonia, the school principal, and asked for permission to take the afternoon off. Antonia, who was very understanding, said yes without hesitation.

Nevertheless Carmen felt uneasy, and she began to think about why she had begun to feel this distance from the teachers in her group. More than once the principal had suggested to her that some of them felt she was authoritarian, but Carmen thought that she had worked on that and improved. Suddenly, in her mind's eye, she saw a picture of the bell she had recently had installed in the teachers' lounge. It had rung for the first time the previous Monday. She had thought it was a good decision because now the teachers would hear the bell and would not have so much trouble getting to class on time.

Carmen was a tall, slender, attractive woman with a no-nonsense, decisive air about her. She had been at the school for ten years, first as a nursery school teacher and then, after Antonia was made principal, as the preschool and elementary school coordinator. She felt a sincere commitment to doing the very best job she could to make sure the school functioned perfectly. An alumna of Los Maitenes, she was proud of having been part of the school's first graduating class. She was totally committed to the school's academic mission, and knew that it was her job to help make sure that the school continued to maintain high standards in terms of student performance. She had great confidence in Antonia, who had seconded and supported Carmen's decisions many times before.

Antonia, the principal at Los Maitenes, was a confident, easygoing woman with a sunny disposition. She had been working at Los Maitenes for thirteen years, first as technical director and for the past three years as principal. The teachers regarded her as competent and committed, and believed in her ability to manage the school; the consensus among most of them was that the organizational aspects of the school had improved since she had taken over as principal, mainly because she made the teachers feel valued as professionals in their respective areas of expertise. As soon as she had taken over as principal, Antonia assembled an executive team that consisted of herself and four additional members: the technical coordinator, the guidance counselor, the preschool and elementary school coordinator, and the coordinator of the head teachers. She was the director, but gave her team freedom to work independently; each member would present his or her ideas and plan to the group and receive feedback and suggestions. They were given ample leeway to do their work without Antonia controlling them, but in general they kept her up to speed on what they were doing and consulted with her before making important decisions.

Several members of the school community had had a hard time transitioning to the new management model implemented by Antonia, because the previous administration had run a very tight ship, making decisions unilaterally, and everyone knew that the administration always had the last word.

Despite this, Antonia was rather concerned because a number of times she had seen Carmen exhibit a very authoritarian attitude with her teachers. She had spoken to Carmen about this more than once. One time, the art teacher had gone to Antonia's office, very annoyed, to complain about Carmen.

*“Antonia,” he said, “Carmen treats me like a child, and nags me about doing my job with my kids... last Friday I looked at her and told her that I knew exactly what I was supposed to be doing, that I didn't need her to remind me, and much less with that bossy attitude. I told her that if she had something to say about my job performance, that we should sit down and talk like two adults, not like a parent with a misbehaving child.”*

### **The bell incident**

During the council meeting everything occurred normally. The head teachers brought up the priority areas where their students needed to make progress over the following trimester, and requested support from different people in different areas in the school.

As the meeting came to a close, María José, a teacher known for her conscientious, serious work with students and for the excellent academic results she achieved in her subject area, stood up and began to speak.

*“A number of teachers in the elementary school—myself included—are extremely upset about something, and I'd like to talk about it here,” she said. “This past Monday, a bell that sounds like a car alarm was installed in the teachers' lounge to alert us when recess ends. The other teachers and I are very bothered by this, because we believe that the purpose of this horrendous noise is to make us go to our classrooms. None of us feels that we need a warning bell to remind us of our obligations. This is offensive to us.”*

*“Who gave instructions to install the bell?” another teacher asked.*

Antonia, surprised, said she had no idea about the bell, and asked the other teachers their opinion. Constanza, a veteran at the school, said,

*“I have been working at this school for 25 years and I have always done my job. Now, I am the first to admit that in the teachers' lounge sometimes you can't hear the courtyard bell, but we are all professionals here and we know that it's our responsibility to arrive on time to class. The school asks its students to learn to be autonomous, yet treats us with no autonomy at all.”*

A few more comments in this vein were enough to convince Antonia that most of the teachers were bothered by this bell. After discussing it with the council, it was decided that the bell would be removed. Before announcing the decision, she reminded everyone present about the importance of starting class on time.

The next morning, Antonia informed Carmen of the decision she had made, and Carmen fell silent. In the afternoon when they reconvened for a meeting to review some administrative matters, it was clear that Carmen was upset.

*“What’s wrong, Carmen? Something’s bothering you, I can tell,” Antonia said, concerned.*

Carmen made no bones about her disagreement with Antonia’s decision to remove the bell:

*“I made the decision to install the bell because the teachers were getting to class almost fifteen minutes late. Antonia, my position was absolutely ignored here. You completely undermined my authority with the teachers.”*

*“Carmen, I understand you’re bothered by this. But you have to know that I was just looking for a solution to an issue that the teachers raised. I didn’t intend to undermine your authority—but I do think that that kind of decision was something you should have shared with me before following through.”*

*“Well, then, how far does my autonomy extend for doing what I think is right? Do I have to consult you on everything?” Carmen rebutted, clearly irritated. “Please, don’t undermine me like that again,” she said. At that, she got up and walked out the door.*

### **Questions for reflection**

1. How should Antonia establish limits to autonomy to avoid situations like this? With what justification?
2. How would you characterize Antonia’s leadership style?
3. Who do you think is right, Carmen or Antonia? Why?
4. How should the autonomy of a school’s teaching staff be managed?
5. What does autonomy mean? How much autonomy do this school’s teachers and management team really have?

**Leading Teacher Teams and  
Groups of Teachers**

## QUALITY FOR ALL OR FOR SOME?

Maria was the principal at a coeducational, government-subsidized private school with an openly Catholic creed. With a population of 405 students from pre-kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, the school was located in a very disadvantaged sector of southern Santiago that was known for its high volume of drugs and weapons trafficking. 92% of the students were from this neighborhood and most of them had little motivation and a very low level of cultural and social capital. Maria had been the principal there for eight years and although at first it had been difficult, she and her teachers had managed, each year, to improve the students' results in the nationwide tests administered each year by the Ministry of Education to measure the school's success in achieving its pedagogical objectives and curriculum goals.

On this particular Thursday afternoon, Maria grabbed her bag, hunted impatiently for her car keys, closed the door to her office and left. She wanted to get home fast, for it had been a trying day; it was already seven in the evening. As she walked out of the building she felt the cold May air on her face, but it did little to banish the uneasiness she felt. Lost in her concerns, she headed toward her car.

Almost inevitably her mind drifted back to what had happened that afternoon at the weekly Teachers' Council meeting, which the school's 36 teachers had attended. María had delivered a report regarding the fourth graders' scores on the nationwide standardized tests in the areas of language, math and science, and related the reported scores to the students' socioeconomic context. Over the previous several years, Maria's school had enjoyed a trend of sustained, solid improvement in scores, which was the result of the teachers' deep commitment to teaching well and the students' diligent schoolwork. This year, however, the school's language scores had gone down a significant nineteen points.

All the teachers knew the question that would be asked of them because at the start of each school year, María worked with them to establish yearly academic goals. As expected, Maria had coolly looked around the meeting room and asked:

*“What do you think explains our drop in test scores this year?”*

### **The teachers' opinions**

Juan Pablo, a young English teacher who had been at the school for seven years and was known for his critical vision of school processes, spoke up:

*“These results aren’t low. They are good results if we consider the objective reality of the 34 students in the fourth grade group. We aren’t miracle workers.”*

In general Juan Pablo got good results with his students, but he also knew that he had to work extremely hard if he wanted all of them to make progress. Sometimes he wasn’t able to meet his goals for all of them, though his students always showed some level of progress. His comment was followed by a long, uncomfortable silence among the teachers. The atmosphere was tense. Everyone knew that the principal’s priority was to ensure that all students were able to achieve and excel, despite the extremely disadvantaged context from which they came. Moreover, there was no selection mechanism at the school; all applicants were accepted until the vacancies were filled. Equal access was a tenet of the school’s educational policy, as was excellence. The school’s mission was to offer quality education to all its students. On many occasions the teaching staff had heard Maria speak to this effect:

*“A good teacher,” she said, “always makes a difference and can turn poverty around. Education is the only opportunity these students have to overcome poverty and start lives with more and better opportunities. Their futures depend on us.”*

The teachers believed in what María said, but they also knew that in adverse circumstances, it was sometimes difficult to ensure that everyone made progress.

A hand went up in the audience. It was Valentina, the head teacher of the fourth grade—the grade with the disappointing scores. She had been at the school for six years. Leaning in toward the group, Valentina remarked:

*“I think the kids got good results. They made a lot of progress from where they were at the beginning of the school year. We needed more time to get better scores. I should remind you that of the 34 kids in the fourth grade, 11 were new this year and arrived here with very low grades. Five of these kids have behavior problems but nothing was done about them. I believe that disciplinary measures should have been taken with two of those five students, and that they should have been expelled because they constantly disrupted class, never paid attention and never worked. In the end, their disruptions kept the other kids from learning.”*

This comment made Maria feel extremely frustrated because she was aware that the school’s mission was to offer quality education for all: no discrimination, no selectivity. In fact, when she recruited teachers her greatest concern was to hire educators with high expectations and who also shared the conviction that all children can learn if they are given the same opportunities. It was for this reason that she found Valentina’s remarks troubling. Maria knew that the school and its teachers were the only hope that many students had for forging better lives.

Francisca, the history teacher, raised her hand and asked to speak:

*“Listen, we’re all here because we’re convinced that all kids can learn. ‘Quality education for all, no exceptions.’ We know the reality these kids live with. We can be the force to help them live with more dignity. This school operates in an area of extreme poverty and we believe that all the kids in the neighborhood have a right to quality education. We have opted for equality as well as quality. Maybe we need to broaden our scope somehow and make a more exhaustive analysis of the students’ progress in order to design better and more effective strategies of pedagogical intervention. I think this sharp drop in scores is an opportunity for us to study more carefully how we are designing the learning process in the classroom.”*

Maria started up her car. She waited for the engine to warm up and began making her way home. A few blocks later she found herself at a red light and waited for it to change to green. Once again she found her thoughts drifting back to the meeting that afternoon. Alejandra, the math teacher’s words now echoed in her head:

*“All of us are aware of the reality our students are dealing with. Now, I also believe that all of us here are committed to equality and excellence. However, working with kids who have severe behavior and emotional issues, who lack motivation and whose parents are so uninvolved in their education, is a huge emotional drain for us. I have to ask myself if the principal is at all concerned with the teachers’ mental health or if she only cares about the kids’ progress, about making sure that none of them get left behind. As teachers, we are affected by the school’s open admissions policy, and we are under a great deal of stress to achieve high scores with all of them equally.”*

To this Maria responded:

*“I agree; our well-being as teachers is important, and we have to work on that. But we can’t neglect our more disadvantaged students; we have to face that reality.”*

The truth was, Maria really hadn’t been aware of this aspect of the teachers’ experience. She had never stopped to think about the toll it took on them. All she had cared about was making improvements, making sure her staff had the skills they needed both for discipline and teaching. She had learned a serious lesson that afternoon, and as she drove home she was overcome by a wave of guilt.

The light changed and she continued on, her mind racing from one thought to another. She was suddenly reminded of the conversation she’d had that week with the mother of Maria Jose, a sixth grader with an excellent academic record. Her mother had come to school concerned about the atmosphere in her daughter’s classroom.

*“I am very happy with the education my daughter is receiving,” the mother had said to María. “But I’m concerned about the five new kids that arrived this year. They seem out of control and use really vulgar language in class. My husband and I are thinking of transferring María José to another school next year.”*

Maria remembered what she said to María José’s mother:

*“I understand your concern, but at this school we don’t turn our backs on anyone.”*

Maria was very concerned because at her school, all students were welcome. She knew that the students didn’t always get along, so keeping the parents happy wasn’t easy. She was also unsettled about the conversation she had recently had with Juan Ignacio, a new eighth grade student from a very large and poor family. She had called him into her office because she was concerned about his low grades and his behavior in the classroom. When she asked him how he felt at the school he told her:

*“I like it here. I have friends, the teachers are smart, but I don’t understand the things they say and I have a hard time keeping up in class. I study but I never get good grades. Nobody at home can help be because my parents never got past third grade.”*

In fact, Maria knew that many of the students who were new to the school were performing under grade level, and when they didn’t understand what was being taught in class, they showed their frustration by acting out. However, she believed that this was where the school had to support its students in order for them to learn and build relationships that might facilitate the learning process.

Maria continued driving toward her house; by now the streets were almost empty. Suddenly her cell phone rang. It was Cecilia, the head ninth grade teacher:

*“Listen, María, I’m sorry for calling so late, but today a couple of students came up to me asking to speak with you because three of their classmates won’t let the teacher conduct the class normally. Can you see them first thing in the morning?”*

*“Of course Cecilia, tell them that tomorrow at 10:30 I have office hours, and I’ll meet them at their classroom. Thanks for calling.”*

Maria thought that by giving equal opportunities, changes were possible. She saw education as a force of change, and she worked hard for it. Nevertheless, it was hard to combine equality and excellence in education. Sometimes equality made excellence and quality harder to attain. She thought to herself about how everyone wants equal opportunities and access, but nobody wants to pay the price. Without realizing it, she had arrived home. She had never felt so glad to be there.

**Questions for reflection:**

1. Do you agree with the way María responded to the student's mother?
2. How should disciplinary issues be handled in the classroom, bearing in mind the school's objective to deliver quality education to all its students?
3. What suggestions would you give María for improving the teachers' well-being?
4. Do you think it is reasonable to pursue both equity and excellence in a school like this?

## **BUILDING A PATH FOR IMPROVING SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

Maria Soledad Luna had been school principal for only six months, but she was determined to push through with the internal improvement project she had decided to take on as her first big initiative. She walked impassively through the halls, and knew that she had to be on time for the coordination meeting. She had managed, with great effort, to schedule this meeting with the teachers on Saturday, outside of regular working hours, in the hopes of making progress with the changes to the school rules and regulations. She believed this work was necessary if they were to accomplish the highly anticipated improvement project. But she knew this would be no easy task.

María Soledad was, without a doubt, an eternal optimist, always looking at the bright side of things. When she studied education in college, she learned that it was essential to invest time, resources and everything else imaginable in the interest of her students' education. Her teaching years had been positive ones, marked by her students' academic achievements, which was very satisfying for her. Over time, she had begun to feel the need to move out of the classroom and work as a principal, convinced that she could contribute more in improving the quality of education through school administration.

She was somewhat concerned about her extreme idealism, for it was a sensibility that could at times be a weakness. The level of detail she dedicated to planning was often something that her colleagues did not understand, though one of her strengths was her very strong conviction that the students always came first when any decision had to be made. And so, that Saturday morning, she stood in front of the entire school community that was debating between a more ideal way of doing things and a more 'real life' approach to things.

When Maria Soledad started working at the school, it had just celebrated 30 years of existence. She would never forget the day she became a part of the school, which was something like a huge family, with over a thousand students ranging from prekindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The school's 80 employees were known for being sociable, dynamic, supportive and full of great ideas gleaned from experience and put into practice over the years. The school was beautiful, painted in shades of white and blue, with wood detailing that jibed with the architectural history and style of the city. Several generations had studied here, and many of its alumni had gone on to do quite well in life.

Every school goes through different stages and cycles. At this particular moment, the region in which the school was located had been hit by a financial crisis. Times had changed, and so had the reality of the school. Once an elite academic institution, the school was now facing problems such as lack of discipline and poor academic achievement that were affecting its image. Nevertheless, Maria Soledad

thought it was necessary to strengthen the efforts to go on with the improvement plan because of the tradition and hard work that had always characterized the school.

## **Reinventing the school**

The principal knew that the teachers had a stake in rewriting the school rules and regulations, and that this would be a great challenge that would affect many things about the school's culture. This was why she had decided to call a special meeting on Saturday morning.

And so, that Saturday she entered the meeting room and greeted everyone with a smile on her face:

*“Good morning everyone!”*

Before she could even sit down, an avalanche of questions came upon her.

The first came from Constanza, the school inspector, who asked in a high-pitched voice:

*“How many changes will be made to the school rules and regulations? Discipline in this school is terrible, the students do whatever they want and we never give punishments that can set examples.”*

Candela, the science teacher, chimed in:

*“She’s right! The students never show any respect. Maria Soledad, you have to do something.”*

Comments poured forth so rapidly that Maria Soledad barely had the chance to respond to any of them.

Juan, the history and geography teacher, a much-respected figure at the school, said:

*“The changes have to be dramatic enough to get rid of the undisciplined students.”*

Dulce del Carmen, an elementary school teacher who had recently graduated from college, rebutted:

*“But people, this is not a reformatory.”*

No one seemed to hear her.

Maria Soledad listened to what the teachers had to say and thought about the postgraduate classes she was planning to implement. She wondered how the teachers could make changes to the rules and regulations so that they would actually be helpful in supporting a new kind of relationship with students and not just revolve around establishing new and harsher punishments. The teachers' remarks were nothing new to her; she had heard them all before in previous meetings with the teachers. How could

she find a way to reflect, in the rules and regulations, changes that would enable the school to function effectively? After carefully listening to all of her colleagues' opinions, Maria Soledad spoke:

*"Thank you all for coming to this coordination meeting. I am aware that each one of you represents an important part of this school community. Our school has always been a point of reference in this municipality. The changes we want to make to the rules and regulations in the area of discipline and school life should reflect our willingness to examine our actions and procedures to ensure that they reflect our educational objectives."*

*"That's what you say! It's been years since anything has changed. Some of our students have excellent grades but are vulgar, rude and don't respect any rules. Others are rude and have awful grades," stated Pedro, the biology teacher.*

*"I can't help but repeat what I said before: this is not a reformatory!" repeated Dulce del Carmen.*

Daniela, the language teacher whose students always got excellent grades, pleaded,

*"We can't leave everything in the hands of the students' families. What is our role as professionals?"*

*"Wait," Ernesto, a math teacher, interjected, "Are we to be held responsible for the attitude of these spoiled kids? I wasn't hired for that!"*

Tension filled the room; María Soledad realized she was going to have to cut off all the comments, because they were sparking too many conflicting points of view that threatened to turn the meeting into chaos. She knew that she could not show weakness and needed to firmly move forward with the meeting. Trying to lighten the mood she said:

*"I hear and understand all your points of view, but it's important that we continue with this meeting. Let's work on the real challenge of this improvement. To start, I've brought you a motivational video called The Butterfly Circus. Why don't we watch it? I think you'll find it interesting."*

The video showed the skills of the owner and director of the Butterfly Circus, who with great conviction had managed to transform the physical and personal disadvantages of each circus member into a transcendent artistic proposal that portrayed each player with true humanity. The director had turned individual weaknesses into opportunities. Maria Soledad felt that this video perfectly represented the work of every teacher: the job of discovering and cultivating each student's talents, even in classes where there was a wide range of capabilities.

After the video was over the principal asked:

*"What do you think of this story? How can we relate to it? How can we not relate?"*

Daniela ignoring the principal's questions, abruptly interrupted:

*"We're not here to analyze a video, we're here to review and modify the rules and regulations. We need to improve the students' discipline, and we can't keep turning a blind eye to this culture of disrespect for the rules."*

*"She's right," said Constanza. "We're teachers, not social workers."*

María Soledad noticed that other teachers had in fact been moved by the video. Sensitivity was running high; it was the right time to start with the next activity. Firmly she continued:

*"The difficulties experienced by the characters in this video remind me that there are some students we don't trust because of their bad behavior in certain situations. But if we can change our perspective and approach, maybe we can discover hidden talents, see the positive, and from there start working toward improvement. What do you think?"*

Touched by the video, Rosa commented:

*"It's true, we need to stop and take notice, and become real teachers to discover the talent and virtues that our students have. We can't just punish negative behavior. The circus director succeeded. We can, too."*

María Soledad then made a strategic move: she stopped talking about the video and decided to openly discuss the matter at hand:

*"Okay then, let's get to work on the rules and regulations."*

The rules and regulations were read aloud, and a detailed list was made of inappropriate behavior, along with brief descriptions of the infractions and their respective punishments. Patricio, an administrative worker at the school, felt that the punishments needed to be revised:

*"How can we punish the students by making them stay home; it seems more like a reward than a punishment, a day off... what's the punishment there?"*

The other teachers' eyes opened wide. Constanza added:

*"Maybe it would be better if we made the students sweep the schoolyard and clean up the school."*

*"Clean up...is that what we call punishment?" asked Candela. "Does that mean that the people who clean up the school are punished for life? Don't you think this might give them the wrong idea? Although...if we conceive of it as community service maybe it wouldn't be so bad. We would turn punishment into something constructive."*

The debate started up once again. This time, however, it was different. There were a wide variety of reactions. As a result of the video, some people in the room were now more open to analyzing, while others remained aloof—perhaps even more than before—to the idea of finding a more humane way to deal with punishment. María Soledad weighed in again:

*“I think it’s appropriate to punish students for wrongdoing, but it would be good to avoid expulsions and suspensions. I like the idea of establishing reparation punishments through community service activities that invite the kids to reflect on what they did wrong.”*

The teachers discussed this proposal energetically:

*“So, helping others is a punishment? Is that what we want to communicate to the kids?” asked Pedro.*

*“Well, it depends on what are we aiming for: do we just want to punish or do we want to generate something positive through the punishment?”*

*“We have to be careful. If we decide that cleaning or doing community work is punishment, then we are going to send a real mixed message about the values we’re trying to instill.”*

*“But lying around at home and watching TV...that’s definitely a reward,” Patricio interjected. “Suspensions never work, as far as I’m concerned; they’re a vacation.”*

*“Don’t you get what is going on? These punishments will throw into question all their values. It would imply that those kids who already clean up or perform volunteer community service are somehow being punished,” Pedro insisted.*

María Soledad started to feel the onset of a migraine; altering the systems already in place at the school was going to be harder than expected. The school rules and regulations clearly needed changes. They had to do something to modify the unacceptable behavior of some students, but they also need to take a look at the school’s stated values, and from there think about how to effectively instill them among the school community. But, how could she take control of this conversation, which was getting wildly out of control? An idealist vision had literally become a headache and María Soledad now felt that the meeting had lost its focus.

A few hours later, the discussion was as heated as ever. María Soledad’s headache got worse and she began to wonder if it was worth spending more time on this. Her husband and kids were waiting for her, to enjoy what was left of the weekend. All she wanted right now was to get home.

**Questions for reflection:**

1. What do you think of María Soledad's approach to change the organizational culture of this school?
2. How would you guide a meeting like this in the interest of bridging the gap between two opposing sides?
3. How might the team work collaboratively to change the school rules and regulations to add compassion to the students' education?
4. Is it possible to address the diversity of needs among an entire student population in one set of rules and regulations?
5. How can regulations favor the construction of positive relations between teachers and students?
6. What is the meaning of punishment for students?

## Leading Teachers

## **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: SUCCESS FOR ALL OR SUCCESS FOR SOME?**

Located in a small, semi-rural village in Chile's central region, the local public preschool and elementary school employed 28 teachers, two head administrators and three specialists to take care of the needs of 300 boys and girls, 60% of whom came from disadvantaged families with low incomes and little formal education. The parents' association was very concerned about the school's scores on the nationwide standardized tests that their children were obliged to take and had been active in supporting the school with extracurricular activities and resources for acquiring materials. This was very important to them, given that once their children finished elementary school, they would continue their studies elsewhere, and their parents wanted to get them into good schools in the larger cities close to the town.

Eugenia, who was the school principal, was 44 years old and had served as principal for three years. She had been selected for the principal's job following a public call for applications run by the local education department. Previously she had been a teacher at the school.

One day, during an extra session of the Parents' Association, the third grade parents' delegate agreed to request a formal meeting with the principal to express the parents' concern about the lack of attention they felt their children were receiving in class. In their opinion, the teacher of one class in particular was disregarding the needs of their children because she was overly concerned about the special-needs kids, who had been placed in the class as part of the school's Integration Program. The meeting was requested by the president of the Parents' Association, Humberto, a small-scale local farmer who had three children at the school.

### **The parents' concern**

As the meeting began, Humberto spoke on behalf of the Parents' Association executive committee and other parents in the class. His directed his concerns to Eugenia.

*“Eugenia, we are here because we would like to request that you speak with Silvia the 3-B teacher, because we feel that our children are not progressing as well as the children in 3-A. We believe Silvia spends too much time with the special-needs kids and is not looking after the needs of the children without learning difficulties. Our children have also told us that for some time now, they have been instructed to help the kids in the Integration Program with assignments that Silvia gives them in different subject areas.”*

Eugenia was surprised, because she had never received a complaint like this before. She personally believed that the full and total inclusion of all the students was essential to the school's mission, and personally had observed her teachers working toward this goal. The school's mission statement, moreover, explicitly stated this same objective.

*"Humberto, please be assured that I am listening very carefully to what you say and am noting your concern so that I can bring it up with Silvia," the principal responded amiably.*

After the meeting, Eugenia decided to first take up the issue with Ismael Ortiz, her technical coordinator, a 27 year-old with two years' experience in the position. Previously a university professor, Ismael possessed more than one advanced degree; his opinions were well regarded and respected by his colleagues. Eugenia asked him to take a look at how the other teachers resolved this situation in their classrooms. And on her own, she called Silvia in for a talk the next day.

### **Gathering the facts**

Silvia, a 50 year-old teacher with a vast amount of classroom experience, was the kind of person who constantly sought to improve herself professionally. For years she had been an elementary school teacher in urban schools in Santiago, where she had been recognized for her very effective teaching methods. For the past ten years, however, she had been living in the countryside because she felt it offered a better quality of life and she also hoped that she might use her teaching experience to the benefit of the local children.

Eugenia called Silvia in to talk about the complaint made by the Parents' Association. After exchanging the usual greetings, Eugenia began speaking.

*"Silvia, yesterday I received a visit from a group of parents from your class. They are very concerned that their children are being held back by the special-needs children, and they are bothered that their children are being asked to assist them."*

*Eugenia paused for a moment and added: "The parents are worried that their children are not learning, and I wanted to ask you if you could shed some light on what's going on."*

Silvia, somewhat irritated and bewildered, said in response:

*"Eugenia, I am very proud to be able to work at a school that looks after the needs of children from disadvantaged areas, and where you, as principal, have always encouraged us to support an inclusive form of education. So in that regard, yes, I am especially concerned about making*

*sure the kids with the most difficulties are able to learn. I give them special activities and I sit with them as they tackle these assignments, to make sure that they understand them and are able to finish them. For the other students, now, I prepare and distribute workbooks, I give them both written and oral instructions. I motivate and push them to work effectively and autonomously, and from what I have observed they are doing very well.”*

Eugenia, seeing how upset Silvia was, tried to soften her voice, make it seem more understanding:

*“Silvia, the parents don’t feel it’s appropriate that you leave the more advanced kids alone and that you make them help the slower kids. From their point of view, this is holding back their learning process, and they feel that their kids are learning less than the kids in 3-B.”*

Silvia, showing little patience for the parents’ objection, firmly held her ground:

*“Eugenia, for me, the collaboration with the children who are doing better is absolutely valid, it’s an integral part of the kids-helping-kids approach. The very best way for our top students to prove what they have learned is by teaching it to others. And the other students who learn from them do so with greater confidence, since they are learning from their peers.”*

Her face red with rage, Silvia got up to leave. Before doing so, she looked Eugenia straight in the eye and said,

*“Everyone knows that in order to truly understand a topic, the best thing you can do is teach it to someone else.”*

Almost out the door, she added, *“And another thing: this is the best way for them to experience, from early childhood, the true meaning of respect and collaboration with their peers, especially those who need them the most.”*

In the meantime, the technical coordinator, Ismael, had spoken to the other teachers, and identified two points of view on the matter of handling inclusion in the classroom. Most of the teachers he consulted felt that in order to improve learning, the most critical factor was that of guaranteeing the curricular coverage of all study plans and programs. Sergio, the 4-A teacher known for his students’ consistently good results felt that,

*“In both internal and external measurements, students should demonstrate solid performance; we also want to see that they are building upon the lessons we have given them. This is how a school like ours earns its reputation, for successfully teaching the curriculum stipulated by the school system. We are here to strengthen public education, and the way to prove that we have done this is with good comparative results.”*

Sergio went on to add:

*“The learning process of the kids with special needs ought to be overseen by the Integration Program’s team of specialists, who work with these boys and girls in spaces outside the classroom, to help get them up to grade level in a way that will allow them, in the foreseeable future, to acquire the baseline skills they need to reach acceptable reading, writing and math levels. This shouldn’t be a regular classroom teacher’s responsibility. That’s why we have specialists!”*

For this reason, Sergio and several other teachers felt that the regular teachers shouldn’t worry about providing reinforcement for these kids, because they had a solid support network of specialists who could help them move forward and learn what the school expected them to. This support would be delivered outside the regular classroom.

The second-grade teachers, however, saw things differently. They felt that the parents were too overbearing and anxious in their quest to control the work of the teachers in the classroom. When asked his opinion on the matter, Rodrigo, the head teacher of the second grade, brought up a totally different concern:

*“Has anyone asked the opinion of the parents of the special-needs kids? What about them? Don’t they have the right for their children to be educated and served by our teachers, as well?”*

Angélica Inostroza, the other second grade teacher, chimed in:

*“We want all of our students to progress within their own capabilities, and the families need to respect what we do. We work with the entire class, offering special activities for the kids that are advancing more slowly. We hope that with this kind of differentiated attention, everyone will be able to learn and master the basic abilities they will need to move forward in life. This should be what our school is known for, beyond any external evaluations. We all know that the external evaluations only encourage segregation in classrooms and schools.”*

After talking to Ismael, Eugenia decided to schedule a meeting with teachers from both grades, to clear the air of the tensions generated by these two approaches toward special-needs education, and which were brought to the fore by the Parents’ Association and their recent complaint.

**Questions for reflection**

1. How might the principal approach this and future meetings with her teachers. Is it necessary to choose one approach over the other?
2. What is the path that Eugenia should take?
3. Is one point of view more correct than the other? Why?
4. What kind of collaboration from the children's families might the principal and the teachers propose in order to improve the inclusive education program, encourage an appreciation for diversity, and stimulate learning for all the students at the school?
5. As an expert in the area of learning and evaluation, what might Ismael, the technical coordinator, do to integrate and create some harmony out of the differences in opinion among the teachers?
6. What actions might Silvia take with the families of the children in question, in order to learn and share the achievements and experiences they have observed among the children?

## A MATTER OF VOCATION

Sitting in front of her computer, Amanda rapidly responded to the emails she had received over the course of the morning. Having been the school's principal for eight years now, she felt it was very much "her" school and devoted far more time and energy to it than what her contract required. "Her school" was a government-subsidized private educational establishment that enrolled boys and girls with special educational needs, at no cost to the parents. The diagnoses of the students, who ranged in age from 6 to 26, were mental retardation, autism, brain damage and Down Syndrome. Their conditions, upon entering the school, were exacerbated by the effects of poverty and lack of stimulation at home. Because these students lived in communities that were extremely poor and stigmatized socially, their family histories were marked by the kind of pain and detachment that often led the children to exhibit serious behavior problems.

Amanda spent a few more minutes reviewing the documents that she had on her desktop, and began to sign the reports that she had to give to her teachers.

All of a sudden, just minutes before the bell rang to signal the end of first period, Amanda heard the sound of loud cries, accompanied by a thunderous noise of tables and chairs crashing to the floor. Hoping she was wrong about who might be the culprit of such a disruption, she wasted no time and dropped what she was doing. Quickly she left her office in the direction of the fracas.

As she entered the classroom, Amanda saw Susana, her newest teacher, attempting to break up a violent fight between two students. After clearing her throat to make her presence known, she spoke to the students in a categorical and authoritarian manner:

*"Nicolás and Sebastián, what is going on here?"*

Susana, very nervous and agitated, tried to explain what had happened in fits and starts:

*"They started to argue...to hit each other, I don't know why. We had to separate them."*

The two boys, nine and ten years old respectively, were still extremely angry and excitable. With the help of a few students, the teaching aide separated them.

Sebastián stared at Nicolás in fright as Nicolás attempted to break free from his classmates who were holding him back as best they could. Gripped by rage and bile, Nicolás continued to threaten his classmate with half-formed, practically unintelligible insults. Sebastián, on the other hand, was visibly panicked and terrified by the prospect of another attack.

Susana, the teacher, was stressed and upset to the point of tears. Without much success, she tried to offer an explanation for what had happened. She rubbed her hands nervously and bit her lower lip in an effort to contain the tears that threatened to confirm the insecurity she felt regarding her failure to handle the incident that had just occurred in her classroom.

Amanda now stepped in to try and change the mood in the room. In a gentle but decisive tone of voice, she turned to the classroom aide and said:

*“Andrea, please take Sebastián to the bathroom so that he may collect himself. When he’s calmer, I’d like you to bring him to my office so that we can talk.”*

With the very same serenity, she asked Susana to go to the teachers’ lounge and take some time to calm down. Then she turned to another aide and asked her to stay with the students until Susana returned to the classroom. Finally, she addressed the students and instructed them to continue braiding the necklaces they had been working on before the incident. Once order was restored in the room, Amanda turned to Nicolás, who had remained in the clutches of the school aide, and said to him:

*“All right, you and I are going to step out for a few minutes so that you can calm down and we can talk a little.”*

Her efforts were pointless, however, because Nicolás was still so incensed that he could only babble a few incoherent threats at both Sebastián and the principal herself. Realizing that her approach was not working, and hoping to calm Nicolás down, Amanda turned to another school aide and said:

*“Manuel, please go to Nicolás’ grandmother’s house. They live just a few blocks away, and they don’t have a phone. Please tell her to come for Nicolás, he has to go home.”*

Upon hearing this, Nicolás began shouting again, and begged the principal not to call his grandmother, saying that she wouldn’t understand anything and that she would hit him when she found out what he had done. Amanda urged him to calm down, saying that she would explain the situation to his grandmother and wouldn’t allow her to hit him.

Meanwhile, as she waited for Nicolás’s grandmother to arrive, Amanda returned to the classroom and asked Sebastián for his version of what had happened. Sebastián explained that while they were working in art class, Nicolás had gone up to him, teasing him and telling him that his work looked awful, and then threw his beads onto the floor and pushed him as if to start a fight. Sebastián reported him to Susana, his teacher, who reprimanded Nicolás, but Nicolás nonetheless continued to bully Sebastián, who finally felt he had no other choice but to challenge Nicolás. And that was how the violent fight had broken out.

Amanda's conversation with Sebastián was interrupted by the arrival of Manuel, the aide, who had come to alert her that Nicolás's grandmother Olga was now waiting for her. As Amanda went out to the vestibule to greet Olga, it became clear to her that the elderly woman was annoyed about having her daily routine interrupted. Amanda invited Olga into her office, and as they walked inside, Olga caught a glimpse of her grandson and took the opportunity to chastise him:

*“So what’s your problem? Don’t you know that school is for studying? When you get home we’re going to have it out, you and me. I’m going to hide your sneakers so you can’t go outside.”*

### **A family history to take into account**

It had been a year since Nicolás's maternal grandmother had been named his legal guardian. His mother had lost custody of Nicolás and his two brothers because of her drug habit. Despite Olga's advanced age, she had been appointed the legal guardian of the three young children, and was now responsible for their care and well-being. Olga was a hard-working woman who had toiled her entire life to raise her children, and now had to do the same with her grandchildren. She had very little formal education, social skills or emotional intelligence, and because of this she was quite unprepared to understand or own up to the many challenges facing her family. Her oldest daughter, Nicolás's mother, was a rebellious young woman who had always refused to heed the admonishments and advice of her mother, and she eventually turned her family's life into a complex saga filled with mistakes and problems, especially for her children.

Nicolás had arrived at the school on a referral from a program run by the Servicio Nacional de Menores (Sernam), the National Children's Service, because at his early age he already had a record of truancy, severe behavior problems and “street” habits. A diagnostic evaluation by a psychologist from the Sernam program determined that Nicolás had a learning disability resulting from an oppositionist and defiant emotional disorder. Since he had already been expelled from other schools and was in danger of dropping out entirely from the regular school system, it was recommended that he be placed permanently in a school for girls and boys with special educational needs.

### **Some surprises at school**

Shortly after Nicolás arrived at the school, Susana and the other teachers began to realize that he did not exhibit the learning difficulties that the initial diagnosis had asserted. Quite the contrary: Nicolás was

quite talented in the area of math and mental calculations, and in reading comprehension as well. He just needed a bit of dedication and time to learn. The teachers also discovered that he had gotten used to getting kicked out of class every time he misbehaved, which had led him to assume that he would never learn anything, that he just couldn't do it. He had very low self-esteem and so every time he failed at some new academic challenge, he would get frustrated, abandon his efforts, and then blame his failure on others, lashing out at everyone and everything within arms' reach.

Amanda knew about all this, and observing Señora Olga's attitude confirmed her suspicions that the child did not have the support he needed at home. As Amanda explained what had happened, Señora Olga listened patiently but Nicolás, just a bit calmer, continued to protest. Amanda stepped in:

*"I'm going to bring this situation to the attention of the Teacher's Committee tomorrow. We'll talk about what happened and make a decision about how Nicolás will be punished. For the time being, I have to ask you not to bring him to school tomorrow. We'll call you to let you know our decision," Amanda explained, drawing the conversation to a close.*

Once the meeting was over, Amanda went to the teachers' lounge to see Susana.

*"How are you feeling?" she asked Susana, concerned.*

*"A little better," replied Susana. "What did Nicolás' grandmother say? Was she furious with him? Did she punish him?"*

*"No," responded Amanda, "She listened patiently when I told her what had happened, although she was clearly angry with him. She said she'd punish him as soon as they got home, that she was going to hide his sneakers so he couldn't go out to the street and play."*

*"What's going to happen to Nicolás now?" asked Susana.*

*"We'll talk it over at the Teachers' Committee tomorrow, but for the meantime he won't be coming to school until we've reached a decision."*

In a quavering voice, gazing at Amanda with red-rimmed eyes, Susana confessed,

*"Amanda, I just don't know if I am prepared to work with these kinds of kids. I have always taught children with learning disabilities, but with kids who are much easier, never with kids like this. You are used to these kinds of kids, but I'm not...I'm really sorry but I think I'm going to have to look for another job."*

For the first time, Amanda didn't know what to say.

### **Questions for reflection**

1. This situation was difficult for Susana. What might Amanda do to keep Susana from quitting? Or should she let her go?
2. Nicolás was not angry at Sebastián, but nonetheless directed his rage at him through inappropriate behavior. What do you think would be an appropriate punishment for him?
3. A fast, direct response to unpleasant incidents is the quickest and perhaps easiest path that the principal might take to resolve the problem at hand. Should she take into consideration Nicolás' record and family history or not?
4. What can be done to help Nicolás reflect on the situation in such a way that he learns from it?
5. Self-fulfilling prophecies swing in both directions of the emotional pendulum: they can cause positive reinforcement of certain behavior patterns and a healthy expectation of success in some cases, but also a fear of failure and an unsustainable resistance to a seemingly pointless future. How might Amanda and Susana bridge the divide between these two extremes?

## EDUCATION FOR ALL – OR ALMOST ALL?

Ena was the principal of a small government-subsidized private preschool for children with special needs. With a student population of 50 boys and girls, the school's mission was to help children overcome social and emotional difficulties as well as trouble with comprehension and expression in their native language, and to help them eventually transition into the regular school system. In addition to Ena, the school's professional team was comprised of an academic coordinator and four special education teachers. Most of the children came from single-parent families, with absentee fathers and mothers with relatively little education who worked as seasonal farm laborers or in factories. When the children were not in school they were usually cared for by a grandmother, older siblings, or neighbors.

Ena had just begun her sixth year as principal of the school, and she was proud of all that she had accomplished: the school functioned well and she always met her matriculation goal which, she knew, made the school's owner very happy. In addition, the students' parents always spoke well of the school, describing it as a welcoming, warm, non-threatening place.

Ena knew that the students' parents felt that they could count on her, and this, in turn, gave her a great sense of security. Her parents felt valued and listened to. They, in turn, acknowledged the excellent academic work of the school's teachers. She knew this was true because the mothers who came to the school in the hopes of registering their children there would tell her things like

*"I'd really like to register my son at this school. I'm Miguel Solís's aunt, and I'm also María Vargas's neighbor—all her grandchildren have studied here and she's told me what a wonderful place it is. She recommended it to me because she said that here, the teachers really care about the children's progress."*

Despite all this, as Ena sat down and booted up her computer, she sighed deeply, closed her eyes and thought, *Another day of this!* She felt overwhelmed and frazzled. She knew that the situation with Leonor, one of her teachers, was a time bomb, but there was little she felt she could do. Leonor was a relative of the school's owner, and had little incentive to improve her performance.

As she thought about Leonor and her students, Ena kept coming back to the same dilemma: what was more important for the teachers to be doing at her school? Were they to provide the kind of education that would only allow certain children to excel, and possibly leave other kids behind? Or was it their goal to achieve a certain homogeneity among all the kids, even if that meant that some wouldn't reach their full potential?

## Getting things ready at the preschool

Emma had always taken care of every last detail in the school—from making payments to overseeing lesson plans. But now she was truly at a loss. She had spent the entire morning assigning teachers to the different grades and classes in the school for the upcoming year, and she could not shake that feeling of anxiety and confusion. She was trying to figure out where to place Leonor, who was her very best teacher. Leonor's students always learned a great deal but she was very unaffectionate with them and not particularly cordial with their parents, either.

Emma knew that the moment would come when she would be forced to explain her decision to the parents. And every time she thought of that moment, she felt like grabbing her car keys and just getting out of there.

For an instant she hoped against hope that Leonor would understand this problem that they had spoken about so many times before. She hoped against hope that Leonor would realize the effect that her approach could have on the small children in her care, that she would see how it might hinder their learning process.

Emma stared intently at her computer screen, searching for the answer, but it did not materialize. She was as unsure as ever. She tried reasoning with herself: if she gave Leonor the newest children, the three year-olds, some of them would cry nonstop and eventually their parents would withdraw them from her class, and Leonor would not attempt any kind of friendly strategies for convincing the parents to stay. The parents would take their kids out of the school and speak poorly of her, as well.

*“On the other hand,” she reasoned with herself, “if I put her with the four year-olds, some of the parents will come to me to tell me that they don’t like her because she is so unfriendly and only cares about teaching what she has to teach.”*

Emma finally decided to give Leonor the older students. Her plan was to pair Leonor with Ana, an assistant teacher who was very committed but also very warm with both students and parents. The principal looked up and, as if to confirm her decision, actually said to herself out loud: *“Maybe it will work; they could make a great pair: Ana is sweet and kind, and Leonor produces results.”*

As she said it she felt a bit guilty, because she knew how important affection is for children, especially those with language difficulties and limited psychosocial abilities. But in truth, there was not much she could do. She had already spoken with Jorge, the owner of the school, and his response had been clear and categorical:

*“I am sure,” Jorge replied, “That my sister-in-law is an excellent teacher. We have never received a formal complaint about her teaching style or her results. People can be very sensitive sometimes, you know, but they forget after a while. And you have done an incredible job here, we have a full roster of students again this year. The Leonor issue really isn’t important, and if something happens I don’t doubt that you will know how to handle it. After all, you’ve been the principal here for six years...”*

The situation was deeply troubling to Ema. She was concerned that Jorge was protecting Leonor and was not able to be objective regarding her job performance. But she also felt uncomfortable with how implicitly and fully he trusted her to resolve any and all problems.

### **The conflicts continue...**

*“I don’t care what your mother said. In the classroom, she’s not the boss—I am. So please sit down right now and get back to work. Otherwise you’re staying in at recess.”*

Ema felt a shiver run down her spine as she heard Leonor. She stared at the TV monitor that showed what was going on in class, and observed how all the kids were working in silence, following the teacher’s instructions. Those who did not were called out by the teacher unceremoniously. Clearly, time was not wasted in Leonor’s classroom; her students worked very diligently.

This did not help answer any of Ema’s questions; yet again she couldn’t help but wonder... the kids at this school had many emotional needs that were not being met at home, and they came here to overcome their language difficulties. So how could they not be concerned about their emotional experience?

Ema knew that, once again, she was headed for trouble. Suddenly, as if to confirm her suspicions, that very day at the first recess she saw something that bothered her. Javier, one of Leonor’s students, fell while he was playing in the school courtyard. Leonor walked over to him, talking into her cell phone all the while, but the child ignored her and ran to Ana, the assistant teacher, who gave him a hug and tended to his bruises.

Despite all this, Ema truly believed that Leonor was an excellent teacher; her results proved this beyond a doubt. Leonor had superb academic credentials and was, in fact, the only teacher in the school who was capable of achieving progress with students who had fallen behind. Students clearly advanced and learned. Her most impressive results were always with students whose families were committed to the school and supported their kids. Yet, as principal, Ema wanted to be convinced of something else:

that not most but all of Leonor's students felt the same kind of security and trust when it came to their teacher.

At the end of the day, Ema decided to ask Leonor in for a talk—again.

*“Ema, you can't imagine how overprotective his mother is! It was just a scrape on his knee. Ana cleaned it and I sent a message to the mother saying, ‘Your son fell and his knee was cleaned. Sincerely, Leonor’*

Ema felt the urge to yell at Leonor and hug her at the same time. Instead, she just gritted her teeth and thought of all the times they had gone over this before. In a warm tone of voice, she said,

*“All right, so you sent a message home, but you didn't explain what happened at all. Our parents need to feel that you are concerned about their children. That is the attitude we are known for here.”*

Leonor refused to budge:

*“All right, but the most important thing for these families is to support their children so that they learn with me. Other people, like Ana, can worry about other situations. My main responsibility is to ensure that the kids learn. The parents should be as concerned as their kids are about their homework, but most of the time I am the only one educating these kids—the parents couldn't care less!”*

Ema knew that the sociocultural environment in the neighborhood close to the school made teaching even harder. Many of the parents had little education and worked as seasonal farm laborers, which meant that they didn't have time to come to the school, and much less worry about their kids' homework.

*“Leonor,” Ema said, “Of course I value your hard work, but there are other things that are important, too. This is a special-needs school, our students come here with challenges and it we have to help them develop their social skills. They need to feel that you love them.”*

*Leonor rebutted. “But that's exactly it! They have problems, and I have to prepare them to overcome those problems so that they can get up to speed and eventually get into a regular school. That's what I worry about, and that is why I am paid and evaluated—to teach them, not to love them.”*

*“Leonor, one part of your job is about teaching curriculum content. The other part is about helping the kids to develop life skills. Showing your concern and affection for them might actually help you do your job.”*

Leonor got up to leave. She looked at Ema straight in the eye, said a curt goodbye and closed the door behind her.

### **Good results**

Each year, at the end of the first month of classes, the school opened its doors to the parents, to show them how their children were progressing. This time, as always, the presentations by Leonor's students were outstanding, demonstrating clearly that they had learned far more than what was required by their curriculum plans. It was impossible not to notice that her group had far outperformed the other class. Elisa, the teacher of the other class, gave Leonor a congratulatory hug and said:

*"Amazing, Leonor! You're such a hard worker, tell me your secret, will you?"*

*"Thank you, Elisa. It's my job, my responsibility. My only secret is to focus on the important things. That's why we went to college."*

Leonor was extremely proud of and happy about her good work, and as she received the accolades of her colleagues, she thought to herself, *Well... it seems I'm not doing as bad a job as some people say. The children have learned more than we thought they would. I am just going to keep on doing what I've been doing, because the most important thing here is that the kids learn everything in the curriculum.*

*"Oh, yes! Congratulations, Leonor, excellent presentation," said Ema, greeting Leonor.*

*"Thank you, Ema. I knew you'd be glad to see how well my class has done."*

After the brief interchange with Leonor, Ema approached Camila, a student of Leonor's with serious learning disabilities. Her mother, a farm worker, was unable to spend much time with her daughter, especially during the blueberry-picking season.

*"Hi, Camila. Oh, you did such a great job! Congratulations!"*

*"I didn't do such a good job. I didn't speak very much, because I haven't learned everything I was supposed to."*

*"But I loved what you did! You were just like a real artist!"*

*"But Miss Leonor said that I don't know anything because I didn't study. That's why she only let me show my drawings."*

Ema didn't know what to say. All she could do was give the child a hug.

## Better off at home

*“Ema, one of the parents from Leonor’s class is waiting to speak with you outside. It’s Camila’s mother,” announced Clarita, the principal’s secretary. “She is insisting that she talk to you and only you. If you want my opinion, she does not look very happy. She looks upset and angry.”*

Ema looked up, surprised. Camila’s mother, at school at this hour of the day? She worked all day picking blueberries. Ema took a deep breath and told Clarita to let Camila’s mother in. As she opened the door, she caught a glimpse of a couple of teachers exchanging reproving glances.

*“Tell me, Maria, how can I help you?” Ema asked, welcoming her in. “What brings you here? Aren’t you usually working at this time of day?”*

*“Miss Ema, I got special permission to take the time off. I’ve come to take Camila out of the school.”*

*“But why, María? Maybe there is something I can do to help you change your mind.”*

*“My daughter tells me that Leonor doesn’t care for her, and I believe her. That woman is always complaining to me that Camila doesn’t learn. She tells me that it’s because I don’t support her, but I can’t do more than I already do—I work very long hours; I have no other choice. If I don’t, I won’t be able to put food on the table. And you understand the situation with my husband. It’s been weeks since I’ve seen him, and this time I don’t know if he’ll be coming back...”*

Ema felt frozen as she listened to Maria. What could she do for Camila? She knew that Leonor couldn’t understand or empathize with a situation like this.

*“Miss Ema, the worst thing of all is that Camila doesn’t want to come to school anymore. She refuses to let me dress her in the morning. She says that she likes the school, but not her teacher.”*

*“All right, María, but then what will you do with Camila? What school will you put her in? There isn’t any other school that can take care of her needs like we can here.”*

*“No school at all...she’s better off at home. She’ll just stay with my mother. I can’t let my daughter stay here if it means she’s going to suffer like this.”*

Ema felt awful. Guilty and awful, because part of her felt that this situation could have been avoided. But then again, she recalled the many times she had tried talking to Leonor, and the many times Leonor had communicated her own equally strong convictions.

**Questions for reflection**

1. What would you do if you were Ema?
2. Is Leonor's position legitimate?
3. What aspects of learning should Ema prioritize so that all the children in her school are able to learn?
4. What actions should Ema take to resolve the conflicts caused by Leonor's beliefs about teaching and learning?
5. Do you think that Leonor is, in fact, giving her students a good learning experience?
6. What leadership qualities should Ema think about developing in order to achieve the school's objectives?

## THE ELUSIVE DECISION

For six years, Marcos had been principal of a small public elementary school serving some 300 students. Most of the children were from low-income families and were considered at-risk, though their performance on regional and nationwide standardized tests was outstanding.

Every day Marcos would walk down the street and watch all the students, everybody hurrying... fathers, mothers, sometimes grandfathers or grandmothers, holding their children by the hand, making sure they felt secure and loved. Marcos was happy that he lived near the school, and he enjoyed developing projects that would benefit the institution and the students in it. He had a good relationship with the teachers, the students, and the educational community in general. Despite the inevitable difficulties he faced, Marcos felt that he was in a good place: he had stability in his position, pride in his school, and motivation to do as much as he could for his students.

Nevertheless, he knew that the morning ahead of him would be complicated; he had a difficult meeting to run, and he'd thought over and over about what would be the best decision to make. He was usually quite a decisive person, very good at quickly adding up the elements for and against a situation, asking for technical input from his colleagues, and always trying to focus his decisions on what was best for the school and the students. But this situation had really thrown him for a loop. He was only hours away from having to make a decision and he still had no idea what to do. He felt an irresistible urge to smoke but knew that he couldn't. Anxiety took hold of him...

### Two paths, two perspectives

Arnoldo and Josefina were in the reception area, not saying a word to each other. They were waiting to learn the decision that they would soon hear from their principal. They'd graduated from the same university and were only a few years apart in age, but their career paths had been completely different.

Arnoldo was about 45 years old, although he looked much younger. He had enjoyed a long and prestigious career as an elementary school math teacher, and now as a school counselor. He was known as a very warm person with excellent interpersonal skills. Marcos very grateful to him because when he'd arrived there was something of a movement against any new principal because, according to some teachers, the previous principal had been unfairly dismissed. At this very crucial juncture, Arnoldo had played a key role in encouraging the teachers, students and parents accept Marcos. This acceptance paved the way for him to implement a series of changes at the school. Arnoldo was a wonderful colleague and a

great supporter; he was a consistent source of help to Marcos in his work managing the school. How couldn't Marcos feel very grateful to such a sincere and loyal colleague?

*"I won't forget this, Arnaldo. One day I'll repay you for your loyalty," Marcos used to say, smiling with satisfaction.*

It was in this spirit that they went about putting together an excellent working team with the other young professionals who'd joined the school. The school was located in a small city, and Arnaldo fit into both the city and the school's culture without much problem. He had so many wonderful qualities: as a work colleague he was loyal; he did everything asked of him; he was responsible and well organized. However, it was clear that he didn't have much initiative to undertake new challenges. In the last two years Marcos had noticed that he was slacking off a bit. He didn't take the same care with his work, his attitude had become less engaged, and sometimes Marcos even felt that Arnaldo subtly took advantage of his loyalty and gratitude. Now, more frequently, Arnaldo failed to fulfill his obligations on time and was not actively contributing to the challenges of the school. He seemed to stand back, not getting involved in projects and activities aimed at improving the school.

Arnaldo always said the same thing:

*"Relax, Marcos. The school's running itself at this point. Don't take on so much responsibility. Nobody will ever thank you for it; we're already doing all we can and nobody will pay you for more for it."*

In some ways Arnaldo was right. It seemed that the education department was making more and more demands on the school all the time. Yet, at the same time, Marcos still believed that his work was important; it was something he felt, and the results were right there before his eyes, in the relationships he observed between teachers and students. At Marcos' school, there was most definitely a spirit to do more, to keep improving.

Josefina, for her part, was a couple of years older. She was a decisive woman who, with great sacrifice, had managed to get her degree, was constantly taking courses and seminars, and even published a few articles in education journals. Her family life was complicated: she had two children in college, many expenses, and her husband had left her a few years earlier, which meant that she alone was responsible for supporting her family. Despite all this, she was a proactive, hardworking teacher who, in a short amount of time, had managed to get a number of activities up and running, had applied for projects and was very motivated to take on projects. Marcos worked very well with her. Recently, moreover, she had completed a master's degree in management of school environment and student life.

*“Marcos, we could do such great things. You know, I was just thinking...”* was a typical phrase of hers, and it filled him with enthusiasm because she’d always follow up with a multitude of creative and practical ideas that they would start working on. Marcos and Josefina had a real synergy that allowed them to carry out projects that they initiated together.

In personal terms, both Arnoldo and Josefina had particularly valuable qualities but they definitely had two different ways of seeing things, two very different ways...

### **The start of the conflict**

In September, just as spring was beginning, Marcos received a call from the department of education: he had to appoint a coordinator of student life by the first week of October. The education department wanted to draw attention to the issue and they wanted Marcos’s school to be a model for this new initiative. The school would receive a significant amount of money that would benefit the entire educational community, but the person in charge would be monitored very closely. A lot was on the line.

Marcos was also informed that since the law against school violence had recently passed, the school needed someone with expertise in that area, as well, to evaluate the school atmosphere and propose different psychosocial interventions and projects for the educational community. It was a very challenging position that would be highly meaningful in terms of professional advancement. There were resources to really do things, and the salary for the position was quite attractive. There was also the possibility of undertaking an internship abroad, and in general the education department had high hopes for the initiative. The education department stipulated that the person selected for this position had to already be employed at the school and had to have a good understanding of the context. Beyond that requirement, the decision was up to Marcos and his management team.

The meetings with the management team began, and together the group drew up a job description for the position that included both academic and work experience. They decided that the person who would occupy the position had to have, in addition to experience, certain personal qualities such as warmth, good interpersonal relations and proactivity. They knew that the education department would support Marcos’s decision. So it was left to the principal and his team to decide who best fulfilled the requirements for this very attractive job.

Within a week the management team began to circulate the news of this new opening and the job description. Marcos expected to receive several applications given that the job was very attractive,

the pay was excellent, and the hours flexible. He was surprised, to say the least, to learn that only two people were interested.

*“Marcos, there are only two people interested in the position: Josefina and Arnaldo,” his secretary told him. That, he knew, was the beginning of his problems.*

### **Conversations in the corridors**

After he'd received their CVs, the team interviewed each applicant separately. Both Arnaldo and Josefina had two meetings each, in which the head of the technical pedagogical unit and the Vice Principal really went after them with questions. It was complicated because both had a similar grasp of legal issues, management and analysis.

Meanwhile, every time they saw him, Arnaldo and Josefina would ask Marcos for his support.

*“Marcos, I hope that you take my record into account, but in addition I hope you think of my loyalty over the years. That's what's really important here, isn't it? This job means a lot to me,” Arnaldo said to Marcos, subtly but firmly. Marcos barely managed a smile.*

Josefina, for her part, said to Marcos,

*“I hope you know how motivated I am to get this job. You and I both know that my work is my best calling card. I know that you'll support me.”*

Marcos felt a huge amount of pressure, and the date for the decision was approaching. At the same time, the education department continued to pressure him, saying that the choice had to be made as soon as possible.

One Friday afternoon, while it was raining—strange for that time of year when it should have been hot and sunny—the Vice Principal approached him and handed him some documents.

*“Marcos, we have a big problem. On Monday we have to hand in the name of the person we want to appoint as head of student life in our school. The management team met with the head of the Technical Pedagogical Unit and we feel that this is a decision you have to make. The two candidates are both suitable. I think that Josefina would bring more to the role because she is excellent in designing and implementing projects, but the head of the Technical Pedagogical Unit, who knows the school inside and out, and is supported by the teachers, feels that we should*

*reward Arnaldo for his track record. We've talked this over and over, and we feel that you, as principal, have to make the decision. We'll support you no matter what your choice."*

As he listened to the Vice Principal, Marcos began to feel strangely hot, his hands began to sweat and he felt overwhelmed with anxiety.

*"But this is a team decision," he replied.*

*"Yes, but the team is divided and we don't want to get dragged down into endless discussions. We need you to make the choice."*

Those words were what made Marcos fully realize that the weight of the decision would be on his shoulders. There was no way around it: he had to make a decision and communicate it to everyone involved.

All weekend long, Marcos analyzed the matter, looking at the situation from every angle possible, but it was just so difficult to decide, for he knew that no matter which candidate he chose there would be consequences. He scarcely slept, was irritable, and ate far too much, as though food could help assuage his anxiety.

When Monday arrived, Marcos walked with a firm step into his office. When he arrived, both Josefina and Arnaldo stood up and said hello. Marcos offered them coffee, to try to buy a little more time, and as they all sipped from their cups, Josefina turned to Marcos and said:

*"Well, Marcos, we're all ears." The moment had arrived and Marcos had to tell them.*

### **Questions for reflection**

1. What criteria should the principal use in order to make his decision?
2. What should he do?
3. What are the implications of his decision?
4. How should he communicate his decision to the two candidates and to the educational community, which includes teachers, students, parents and guardians?
5. What strategies should the principal use to properly manage the frustration of the teacher (or teachers) not selected for the new position?

## **NO WAY BACK**

In a suburban area there was a coed, non-religious public school that provided education for children from kindergarten through high school. The school was called El Ninos. Most of the families living in this school district fell into a low socioeconomic bracket, and lived in highly disadvantaged conditions. The overwhelming majority of the families regularly received aid from state-run programs aimed at eradicating poverty. The population at the school, close to 420 students, had been steadily decreasing over the past five years.

### **On the way to school**

Pedro, a philosophy teacher and head teacher of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, sat on the public bus headed for school. On this particular morning he was feeling a tremendous sense of satisfaction because he felt that his students were finally beginning to understand the meaning of 'living and acting according to the value of the truth.' He had lost track of how many times he had said to them, "Kids, a liar is far more easily caught than a thief." For good reason these kids had been his top concern this semester.

### **The return to teaching**

Pedro often asked himself how these kids had come to be so special to him. Why, he wondered, did he care so much about them? Then he thought back to how he had arrived at El Ninos in the first place. It was simple, really: the country had been hit by an economic crisis, he had suddenly gotten laid off and had had to look for work. His friend Julio was the person who motivated him to go back to teaching. "I know you like teaching," Julio had said to him. "We all know there's no money in it, but it's a stable income at least." Julio had been very straightforward about El Ninos, describing it exactly as it was: a place with very disadvantaged kids, a number of unresolved internal conflicts, high turnover of both teachers and students, and a not-always-enjoyable working environment. Despite this, Pedro made up his mind and accepted the offer to return to work as a teacher.

The 11<sup>th</sup> grade class was very small, due to the dramatic decrease in registration that had occurred over the past five years in schools throughout the district. His class had only seven students, two girls and five boys. This meant that Pedro was able to quickly establish a solid, personal relationship with each of his students.

From the start it was clear that this group of students was especially perceptive, astute, imaginative and ingenious, qualities that came through in every one of their opinions and comments, some of which were innocent and some of which were fraught with double meaning. It was a heterogeneous group, too: four of the boys had gotten in trouble before for behavior problems, vulgar language, and attempting to instigate fights, conflicts and thefts in the school. Two of them had police records, as well. The only exception was Miguel, who stood out for his exemplary behavior. His goal was to enter the army, for which a good school recommendation was essential. The girls, Rosita and Camila, had good grades and behavior reports both in and out of school, and they were very active members of the local evangelical church.

For the more troubled students with police records, a certificate that confirmed their status as full-time students was a mitigating factor in the eyes of the judges who reviewed their cases; in practical terms it could mean a reduction in sentencing. Regular attendance at school might even allow them to avoid being sentenced entirely. For students like Rosa, Camila and Miguel, however, the school represented the very distinct possibility of breaking out of the cycle of poverty and marginality into which they had been born. They believed firmly that education, knowledge, cultural capital, respect and responsibility would open the doors to a brighter future for them.

The driver of the bus slammed on the brakes, yanking Pedro out of his reflections momentarily, but he quickly returned to his thoughts, this time pondering the personal motivations that prompted him to go to work every day. These included a teaching approach based on true concern for his students, building spaces for mutual trust, and strengthening such basic values as truth, respect and responsibility. This had become something of a leitmotif for him: he felt that the psychology and philosophy that he taught needed to have a practical, transformative effect on his students' lives. He recalled the many good moments they had shared already, and of how they had established bonds of trust, celebrated birthdays, ate breakfast together every Monday, and received accolades for a play they had performed. Nevertheless, his face grew cloudy as he recalled an unpleasant, disturbing incident that had occurred the previous day, and he glumly returned to reality.

He stepped down from the bus with a dark look in his eyes, and watched on indifferently as the bus trundled away without him. He crossed the street to the school, unenthusiastically greeted the kids in the courtyard, and went inside to the school library. As he sat down, he began to review his class material for the day but once again, more intensely now, the memory of that terrible moment of silence in his classroom came rushing back. He tried to push the thought away, but the memory persisted, resisting his efforts

## The Incident

Pedro recalled the stony silence in the classroom. The students had looked at each other, their faces reflecting different degrees of emotion, concern, and attitude: in some students he saw feigned innocence, while in others he found unacknowledged guilt.

He couldn't erase a single detail of the previous day's events. He had entered the classroom and cheerily greeted his students, as always. Then he moved to his desk and put the class log as well as his briefcase, which contained his personal papers and other things, on the desk. Suddenly he realized that he needed to make some photocopies for that day's class, so he left the classroom for a few minutes. Before leaving, he told the students that he would be about five minutes. He recalled saying hello to a colleague in the hallway on his way to the photocopier, and while he waited for his material to be copied, Rebecca, the language teacher, came by. In an ironic tone of voice, she said:

*"So how are your little angels behaving themselves?"*

*"Fine, better and better in fact. You just have to have patience with them, that's all."*

*"Well, if you want my opinion I think they're the most insufferable class. You see them three times a week—I have them every single day. Can you even imagine what that's like? Class with them is a three-ring circus, I practically have to use military discipline to get them to calm down."*

*"Don't you think that maybe you're being a bit hard on them?" Pedro asked.*

*"Listen, it's the only way. How else will they understand that this is a school? Those kids need rules and discipline! That's what I think, anyway, and you know what the principal thinks..."*

## The first question

Pedro fell silent after that last comment, gathered up his photocopies and returned to the classroom. The instant he walked in, however, he sensed something was amiss: there was an almost palpable sensation of nervousness among the students, as if they knew something was about to happen. He looked at his desk and saw that the class log, his folder and his briefcase had been moved slightly. In a calm, collected voice, he asked:

*"What's been going on here, kids?"*

*“Well...we were looking at the class log, to see if the history teacher had put our grades in, that’s all,” answered Felipe, one of the more troublesome boys, both in and out of class.*

*“That’s it?” Pedro asked. “Why is my briefcase half open, then? Who opened it?”*

*“No, no...you left it like that,” said Carlos, another student that the teachers had long since identified as a troublemaker.*

Pedro took a very deep breath, exhaled a long *“Hmmm...”* and proceeded to call attendance and jot a few things down in the class log. He noticed Miguel had his head down and was staring intently at the floor. Rosita and Camila seemed anxious for the class to get started. The room was unusually quiet, the atmosphere heavy, as the students darted nervous glances at one other. Pedro knew that something had happened, and he also knew that something was going to have to happen. The students themselves were anticipating it.

Pedro taught his class that day, and a few minutes before the bell rang, he decided to look through his briefcase. Instantly he realized that his things were not in their place. He saw his calculator, his date book, his logic book, his keys and his wallet. Though he hesitated for a second, he decided to go ahead and look inside the little pocket where he kept his money, and saw that there was no money there.

The sound of the bell once again pulled him out of his thoughts and recollections. As he lifted his head, he saw the school principal walking down the hall toward him to say hello.

*“How are you doing, Pedro?” the principal asked. Before Pedro could respond, the principal added, “If you’re okay, then we’re great! Let’s keep doing what we’re doing,” and kept on walking.*

By the principal’s tone of voice and the swiftness of his response, Pedro sensed that he knew that something was up. A flood of questions came to mind: How had he found out? Had Miguel, Rosita or Camila spoken to another teacher? Was he exaggerating? The principal had said *“Let’s keep doing what we’re doing.”* What could that mean? Was it a message implying that he should just accept the status quo at the school, or was he trying to encourage him to be bold, make his opinion known and propose some changes?

### **The teaching experience**

Pedro walked down the hallway and remembered that other teachers had told stories of being robbed. Typically, the teachers chose to overlook these types of situations when they arose. He also remembered what one teacher had once said to him:

*“We all know about the kids’ negative habits and behaviors. It’s our responsibility to not bring anything of value to the classroom.”*

Pedro had always refused to buy into this kind of reasoning, but the incident had changed everything—this time he’d been the victim and his aggressors were the very students with whom he had established bonds of trust and affection. He knew he would have to take some kind of action but he didn’t know what. Silent, with his head down, he continued on his way.

Confused and saddened, Pedro decided to go to the cafeteria for a break. As he left the school building he breathed in a large gulp of fresh air, and revisited the moment that he had opened his wallet. His heart had started racing, and little beads of perspiration appeared on the back of his neck as he struggled to think of what to say to the kids. The first thing that came to mind was to tell them off—to say that it had been pointless to treat them with kindness, understanding and concern, as if they were educated people. He thought of telling them point blank the number of times he’d stuck up for them, about the many times he had defended them in front of other teachers. How could he possibly express the frustration and disappointment he felt?

As he relived the moment internally, he once again felt filled with impotence and shivers raced down his spine. How could this have happened? What did I do wrong? Why wasn’t I able to earn their trust and respect? Where did I go wrong? Was I out of touch with the reality of this kind of school? Should I give up trying to be a person who instills values in kids? Am I going to have to be like the other teachers and spend my time reprimanding and punishing them? Or should I pretend this never happened? Will I ultimately have to give up my personal mission, which I feel is an innovative approach to these kinds of kids?

Despite these troubling reflections, Pedro had somehow managed to calm down. Without revealing even a twinge of emotion, in a calm but categorical voice, he returned to his classroom and stood in front of his students. He said, in a calm voice:

*“Alright. You have 15 minutes to discuss this amongst yourselves and, anonymously, return the money you took from my wallet.”*

The students were not expecting this. In fact, they were so shocked they didn’t even utter a “Whaaaat?” in protest. None of the students claimed innocence. They all just looked at each other, perhaps gathering their courage. Only Beto, who spoke infrequently in the class, dared to stammer after a few long seconds,

*“Are you sure that you had money in your wallet?”*

The atmosphere in the room was thick, and Beto's attitude revealed how accustomed he was to being treated as a suspect. The boldest kids in the class looked at him as if he were presenting a new game, a trick, moving into new territory in this teacher-student relationship. Pedro's response, however, was swift:

*"There was money in my wallet."*

Beto egged him on:

*"But are you sure, like really, really sure?"*

Pedro ignored this, swallowed hard and turned to leave the classroom. Before closing the door he said:

*"I'll be back in 10 minutes. I hope you return the money."*

As he closed the door behind him, Pedro felt as though time had suddenly come to a halt. He walked away and wondered what on earth he would do if the money wasn't returned.

### **Questions for reflection**

1. Considering the characteristics of the school and the students in Pedro's class, did it make sense to use a pedagogical approach based on affection and the creation of spaces for establishing trust? Why?
2. Do you believe that the normative, disciplinarian approach that Rebecca advocates is appropriate and pertinent in this context? Why?
3. What do you think of Pedro's decision to wait until the end of class to address the situation with his missing money?
4. What are the ways one might interpret the principal's remark of "If you're okay, then we're great! Let's keep doing what we're doing?"
5. What would you advise Pedro to do when he realized his money was missing?
6. After this incident with the students, what do you think Pedro next steps should be?

## A QUESTION OF ETHICS: STUDENT VS. TEACHER

In a rural municipality in Chile's central region there was a school that served students from prekindergarten to 8<sup>th</sup> grade, with 700 enrolled students, 40 teachers and 35 teaching assistants. 80% of the students were highly disadvantaged, and according to the Ministry of Education, the school had a medium-low socio-economic ranking. One of the common denominators among the students was their very low level of cultural capital, which represented a constant challenge to the teachers.

Most of the students' parents were agricultural laborers who worked during the harvest and production seasons, which meant they lacked a stable income. 50% of the parents had not finished elementary school, and fewer than 3% of the parents held professional degrees.

The school principal, Ignacio, stared into the coffee cup he drank from every morning, searching for an answer to the problem he had to resolve that day. He thought back to all the conversations and events that had conspired to transform a seemingly typical problem into an extremely complex situation with potentially an even more complex solution, as different people began weighing in with their opinions and perspectives.

It all started one April morning as Ignacio returned from the schoolyard, as he did every day after overseeing the students' return to class following the bell that signaled the end of the morning recess. As he arrived at his office he found three 7<sup>th</sup> grade students, Isidora, Patricia and Pablo, impatiently waiting for him. As he approached them, Pablo stepped forward and spoke up, in a nervous voice:

*"We've come here because we've just handed in a complaint against Ricardo, the art teacher."*

Surprised, Ignacio asked why, and the students answered:

*"During his class, he's always telling us stories that seem to have double meanings, he tells us things about his private life, saying he wants to set an example for us, so we learn certain things about how to behave. He doesn't take care of his personal appearance and some kids have seen him with his zipper down. We feel that he hints at situations that are inappropriate."*

Upon hearing this claim, Ignacio ushered the students inside his office and asked them point blank:

*"What do you mean by 'double meanings?'"*

*"Well, he tells us things about his marriage, he talks about his life and his personal family issues and how he has overcome them," Patricia answered, staring at the floor.*

Alarmed, Ignacio pressed on:

*“What do you mean when you say he had his zipper undone?”*

*“He had his pants zipper undone and you could see everything, some pubic hair...and some kids say they saw something more,” Isidora replied.*

*“Men wear underwear,” Ignacio replied.*

*“It seems like he doesn’t. You could see everything,” Pablo answered, looking Ignacio in the eye.*

With over 30 years’ experience as an educator, Ignacio had served as principal at a number of different schools, and he had been principal of this school for seven years. Never, in his entire career, had he been witness to an accusation such as this. He was shocked and anxious as he pondered all the doubts and questions the students’ accusation had prompted. At this very moment, Chile was at an especially sensitive juncture with regard to this matter, due to a wave of accusations alleging sexual abuse on the part of teachers and people who worked in schools. Every day, the media brought new sex abuse cases to light, both in Chile and around the world. Ignacio knew that many of these allegations were false, but he also knew that some were likely true. He didn’t know whether to believe the students or confront the teacher directly.

### **In need of a solution**

Taken aback by the students’ story, Ignacio held an emergency meeting with Pedro, the school’s general inspector, who was on very good terms with both the students and staff. Pedro and the inspector were responsible for monitoring and enforcing the school’s Rules and Regulations Handbook, which meant that they were also in constant contact with parents. For this meeting Ignacio also called in the school psychologist, the social worker and the head of the Technical Pedagogical Unit (TPU), the school’s curriculum expert.

Once everyone was assembled, the principal explained the case in detail and asked for suggestions that might help him determine the right course of action to take. He also asked for discretion. After listening carefully to what Ignacio described, the general inspector said:

*“This is a very troubling, delicate situation. Students will invent absolutely any excuse to get out of class. It’s all too easy to tarnish a teacher’s reputation; you can’t believe everything these kids say. These types of students should be punished--severely,” he declared, and angrily added, “We should be more selective with the students who enter this school.”*

Marysol, the school guidance counselor, spoke up in a concerned voice:

*“Our school is an inclusive school. It welcomes diversity and, to a certain degree, this type of problem is inevitable. If we have selective admissions, we will be taking away opportunities for many students whose only chance for getting ahead is this school.”*

Ignacio looked at everyone present, took a deep breath, and in a grave voice said:

*“This is indeed a very delicate situation, not only with regard to Ricardo and the implications for him professionally. We might be facing a possible violation of rights or abuse, and that could be from the teacher to the students or from the students to the teacher.”*

Diego, the head of the Technical Pedagogical Unit, was a man with many years of experience in the school. Clearly concerned about the situation, he said:

*“Ricardo is irreproachable professionally, he does everything that is asked of him on the job, and throughout his career he has received nothing but praise. There are many students who can vouch for him in that vein. On a personal note, I’d like to add that when I’ve visited him in class I have seen great quality in his work; he knows how to manage the kids.”*

Marysol began to look uncomfortable, and spoke up again:

*“But these students—they may be a little challenging, but they are good students. They don’t have learning problems. They have no reason to make this story up!”*

The psychologist, who had been silent up to this point, now joined in the conversation:

*“I think this is a very tricky situation. It’s our duty to investigate so that we can determine whether the students’ accusations are true, either fully or partly. We must also be fair to the teacher and learn his side of the story. Would it be possible to have an interview with him? We need to be very clear about his version of the events and attempt a mediation that will give us a full picture of the behavior of both parties.”*

Pedro, visibly angered by this, replied:

*“Fine, but we can’t just ignore the kind of families we have in this school and the background they come from. Many, many times I’ve seen students make up stories to avoid going to class or to damage a teacher’s reputation. We must be careful with this investigation. You never know—some students and/or parents might present false accusations in the hope of some kind of financial gain.”*

## Looking for answers

Ignacio pondered the idea of starting an investigation. He honestly didn't know if he believed the students' story. Ricardo had always been an excellent teacher; moreover, he had been at the school for many years. Ignacio had never heard an accusation of this type against him. Ignacio wondered if what had happened had simply been a careless mistake, or if in fact, the students had concocted the story to obtain some sort of financial gain. Was it really possible that Ricardo had done something so unethical?

After thinking about and considering the case from all the perspectives raised at the meeting, Ignacio decided to start an investigation, to be supervised by the general inspector and the psychologist. It would involve, quite simply, asking other students and teachers, in private, about what had happened. He asked Ricardo not to come to school the next day in order to shield him from any comments from students and parents.

## The investigation begins

Ignacio called Ricardo to his office to discuss the allegations. After hearing what the students had said, Ricardo responded, with anger in his voice:

*“All right, I think we have to get some things straight here. It's true that I had my zipper undone, but it was just a careless mistake and there was no inappropriate intention on my part. As soon as I realized, I turned around and zipped up my pants. A few kids made some jokes, which I just ignored. And I'd like to add that it is not true that I talk to the students about my private life in class. I was only trying to give them examples about respecting others.”*

Finally he said:

*“Look, I am a teacher with over 30 years of excellent professional performance. The students involved are negative ringleaders; they are doing this to harm me and my professional reputation. I think that they have ulterior motives, as well.” Looking the principal in the eye he added: “I absolutely deny all the accusations.”*

Ignacio drew in his breath and trying to sound calm, responded:

*“Ricardo, I hear what you are saying but we must investigate this matter. You are not to come in tomorrow to teach class. We will take measures based on the information that the general inspector and the psychologist gather. I suggest that you don't speak about this with anyone, and*

*I urge you to remain willing to give us the information we ask of you. It may be necessary for you to have a talk with the students, in some kind of mediation situation.” Ricardo agreed to not come to school the next day.*

### **People start to get involved**

The next day, Claudia, Patricia’s mother, appeared at the principal’s office to discuss her concerns regarding what her daughter had told her about Ricardo. She told the principal that she was certain her daughter was telling the truth because her daughter never made up stories about things that went on at school.

*“I think Ricardo should not be allowed to continue teaching. He will obviously take revenge on my daughter, and that will affect her grades.”*

*Ignacio responded, “Please, Claudia, I want you to trust me here. We’re investigating the situation and we are prepared to take whatever actions are necessary depending on what we find.”*

*“I certainly hope so, Ignacio. Nobody, including you, ever moves a finger at this school. And if you don’t investigate, I will take the matter to the police.”*

News about the accusation spread quickly to several of the teachers at the school. The next morning, a group of them appeared at the principal’s office to show their support for Ricardo and to demand punishment for the students who made the accusation. Diego, the technical pedagogical chief, led them into the office abruptly and angrily:

*“Ignacio, you have to expel Isidora, Patricia and Pablo. You have to protect us from this kind of arbitrary and malicious accusation.”*

Still Ignacio held firm and told them that the investigation needed to be fair and needed to be completed before any action would be taken.

The next day, Ignacio received another visit: it was Bruna, Ricardo’s wife. She had come to drop off a medical disability certificate for her husband, signed by a psychiatrist. She informed the principal that Ricardo had decided to opt for an early retirement because of a psychiatric disability. This new and sudden information made the principal wonder even more about what had really happened, and what was really going on.

In Chile, teachers' retirements are very meager and do not allow retirees a decent living. Those who retire with a psychiatric disability can receive a slightly better retirement payment. With this in mind, a whole host of new questions now raced through the Ignacio's mind: Was it possible that all of this had been planned to establish a precedent for early retirement? Or was it possible that the alleged depression was real, and had been brought on by the pressure experienced by teachers who work in vulnerable contexts?

As he mulled over the different angles of this very complex situation, Ignacio found himself in a real quandary. There were so many people demanding a response from him, and each of them had his or her own particular stake in the matter. On one hand, he felt it was his duty to protect his teachers. On the other hand, he believed it was important to defend and respect the position of the students and the parents. Ignacio knew that the parents felt that the school needed to respond to the students' accusations. He was also aware that the children felt uneasy. He just couldn't decide what steps to take. According to the general inspector, it was not unheard of for parents and students to try to tarnish the school or the teacher's name in the hope of securing financial gain in the form of compensation.

### **Questions for reflection**

1. What would you do in this situation?
2. Would it be enough to make a thorough investigation of the alleged behavior reported by the students and take the most drastic measures possible to put an end to this type of situation? How would you direct the investigation?
3. Should Ignacio try to regain Ricardo's trust? If so, how would you do it?
4. Is it advisable for the principal's office to inform the entire staff about these kinds of situations, to avoid misinterpretations and to allow the entire school to reflect on the matter as a group?
5. How would you address the parents, the students, Ricardo and the other teachers in the school?

## **TEACHING NOTES**

## TEACHING NOTES INTRODUCTION

### **Curriculum Materials to Enhance the Education of K-12 School Directors Who Aspire to Become Elementary and Secondary School Directors**

In Chile, literacy rates are high and the pace of change in schools must accelerate to match the increasing demands of the global economy of today's society. Nowadays, students need not only to be literate, but also must learn to work collaboratively, to solve complex problems, to think critically, and to communicate with different kinds of people.

In January 2010, Chile became the 31st country to join the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). As a member, Chile has committed to the OECD mission of improved economic policy making and providing the highest health, education, and employment opportunities to its citizens. This means new investments in education at all levels. Chile has made progress in this regard so that its spending on education as a proportion of GDP is 6.9% as compared to the OECD average of 6.1% (OECD, 2011, p. 232).

Major reforms will be necessary to improve the conditions that influence student learning. Ultimately, true reform will be won in classrooms and in local schools by individual teachers and directors who have access to exemplary professional development programs. These programs must offer practitioners a deep and thorough understanding of leadership, organizational structure, assessment systems and strategic planning to open windows on their educational practice and take schools towards continuous improvement.

### **The School Director**

The school director is perhaps the most important individual positioned to lead this change for children. Previous roles for directors as managers of the administrative area of buildings needs revision in order to meet the new demands that face education and students in today's world. The new directors for the 21st century must not only manage administrative tasks and hold high expectations for children, teachers, and the community; they also must support and lead teams of teachers to teach new skills in innovative and effective ways.

In order to be successful and thrive in this era, school directors need outstanding training and support. The Chilean Ministry of Education has emphasized the need to focus these resources toward school director development.

## **The Book**

This book of 15 cases represents a unique and compelling project cosponsored by the Ministry of Education in Chile and the Harvard University David Rockefeller Center of Latin American Studies to provide exemplary materials for study programs, intended for those preparing to be directors and for experienced school directors.

Our work involved training school directors in the development of these materials and the subsequent delivery of 30 drafts that were submitted to an extensive editing process that ultimately resulted in having 15 cases produced both in English and Spanish.

This book is for those vested with the responsibility to educate and support school principals. Each one of its cases represents a “trainer of trainers” model. To increase the impact of these materials, Professors Katherine K. Merseeth and James Honan of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA intend to help higher education faculty to implement these materials in effective ways.

## **The Contents and Use of the Book**

The specific teaching materials included in this book are called teaching cases. When combined with a particular pedagogical approach called the “case method of instruction”, these materials offer the potential to enliven the education of directors and other practitioners in multiple sectors of education. Building upon the historical success these materials and methods have enjoyed in the United States, in professional fields as diverse as business, law, medicine, and social work, there is great promise for the use of these materials and pedagogy in the education of directors (Merseeth, 1991, 1996, 2013; Shulman, 1992; Sykes, 1989).

The situations described in these cases represent actual experiences of school directors in Chile. This is an important and unique advantage of these materials because they depict the reality of both rural and urban schools in Chile. Each case is bounded—it is specific, often delineating a particular

dilemma or tension that demands exploration and resolution by the director. The cases include issues of school structure, government policies, human resources, finances, and philosophical beliefs that require delicate and wise decision making in order to lead schools effectively. Because these issues are complex and often intertwined, the printed representation of the cases enables school professionals to examine these influences and issues more deeply and carefully than is usually the case in the course of everyday practice.

In the view of researchers, cases and case-based instruction stand to help participants develop important problem-solving, leadership, decision-making and implementation skills. Case readers learn to diagnose problems, recognize multiple influences and perspectives, and engage in the exercise of suggesting and analyzing possible solutions and courses of action. Cases also offer an opportunity for inquiry in which participants can discuss various courses of reform and practice analysis in a safe environment before moving out into the “real” world. In this way, directors can “try out” ideas and approaches, often building new understandings by listening to the interpretations and suggestions of others in the discussion.

### **What Are Cases and Case Methods?**

What is a case, exactly? Though definitions differ, and sometimes widely, the cases in this volume are narratives that attempt to describe as completely as possible, practice in actual schools and communities across Chile. Cases seek to present multiple perspectives of the school and may include specific comments and observations from the point of view of teachers, students, administrators and community members. Good cases bring a “chunk of reality” into the higher education classroom to be examined, explored and utilized as a window on practice that case discussants can use to learn, study and practice thoughts on leadership. The cases in this volume do not offer a critique or analysis of the situation—that is the responsibility of the reader.

The term ‘case method’ refers to the way in which cases are used; a variety of approaches may be employed. Methods may include individual reading of cases for reflection to deepen one’s awareness of different strategies, or opportunities to engage with others in an active and lively analyses of practice. Case methods may include case discussions led by facilitators or debates with no specified discussion leader. Whatever the approach, it is important to stress that “cases” and “case methods” are closely related.

Types and purposes of cases can differ, sometimes significantly. Case purpose in professional education tends to fall into three general categories: as exemplars to portray, study, and emulate best practices; as dilemmas or conundrums to practice skills of analysis and action-taking; and as reflective pieces

intended to deepen personal thought and insight (Merseeth, 1996). This particular volume includes cases intended to engage the participants in the second category: as opportunities to practice analysis and decision making skills. As such, these materials attempt to portray a balanced point of view, offering multiple perspectives and experiences of the various participants, helping the reader understand different points of view and tensions that the protagonist in the case must confront. Because of this representation, cases ideally foster active discussion about difficult, complex, dilemma-ridden situations. Specific answers and solutions are not presumed.

### **A Guide to Case Discussion Participants**

Case-based discussion classes and those of more traditional lecture or seminar format differ in significant ways. For example, in case-based classrooms it is essential that participants take an active role. They are not passive, waiting for the answer from the professor. For effective learning to occur, case discussants must complete any pre-case exercises and read the case thoroughly before the beginning of the discussion. Individuals should come to the discussion with a thorough familiarity of the story line, the actors, the issues, and the dilemmas presented in the case. Learning through case discussions is facilitated by voicing ideas and understandings of the case and by through listening to the interpretations of others. Thus, participants must not only be familiar with the material, they must be ready to offer their ideas, reflections, assumptions and suggestions for action. However, listening is as important as speaking in a case discussion. A productive learning community is one in which participants build on the contributions of one another to create deeper and more robust understandings of the situation. During the entire process, participants must try to be reflective and internalize ideas, as well as being conscious of what is happening around them. Learning by the case method can be an extremely powerful and enjoyable way to gain new knowledge and to grow as a professional.

### **A Guide to Case Discussion Facilitators**

The skills required to effectively lead case discussions are multiple and complicated. First and foremost, facilitators must adopt the mindset that recognizes that the case discussion facilitator is not the 'sage on the stage' but rather a 'guide on the side.' The participants lead the discussion and it is the facilitator who only gently steers the conversation with occasional clarifying questions or suggestions. It is not the role of the facilitator to hold the "right answer." Instead, it is the responsibility of the discussants to argue and debate various courses of action and evaluate each with respect to possible outcomes. Such a role for

the discussion leader suggests a change in many of the traditional assumptions about the role of faculty and students in higher education.

In case discussion, the facilitator must be extremely familiar with the details of the case—the facts—about characters, context, issues and dilemmas. This is important because it is the role of the facilitator to keep the discussion grounded in the case itself in order to optimize learning. In addition, the facilitator must manage the discussion process to ensure that all voices are heard and that the discussion carefully considers multiple ideas and points of view. Often a facilitator will keep track of comments and discussion by making notes on the board where all participants can be reminded of the discussion process.

It is exciting to bring actual cases from Chilean classrooms into the higher education programs that seek to educate current and future educators who perform the critical role of school director. We trust that those who use these materials will find them as satisfying and helpful as we have in developing them.

Katherine K. Merseth  
Cambridge, MA USA  
December, 2013

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## TEACHING NOTES AGENDA

### TEACHING NOTES BY TOPICS

#### **Leadership: Dilemmas Regarding the Purpose of Schools**

- Civic (mis)education
- Cultural integration: A challenge inside the classroom
- Two perspectives
- Training for work and training for life
- The role of the school: What are the limits?

#### **Working with Multiple Stakeholders Including Boards**

- Conflicting approaches
- The sound of a bell

#### **Leading Teacher Teams and Groups of Teachers**

- Quality for all or for some?
- Building a path for improving school climate and culture

#### **Leading Teachers**

- Inclusive education: Success for all or success for some?
- A matter of vocation
- Education for all – or almost all?
- The elusive decision
- No way back
- A question of ethics: Student vs. teacher

## **Leadership: Dilemmas Regarding the Purpose of Schools**

## TEACHING NOTE: CIVIC (MIS)EDUCATION

### Case Synopsis

Ernesto Díaz worked as principal in a non-denominational private school, grades k-12 for approximately 1300 students. Most of the students came from middle to upper-middle class families. Ernesto employed 60 teachers and had an executive committee that assisted him in making decisions and implementing projects aimed at helping the students to achieve academic excellence. At the monthly meeting of the Parents' Assembly, Ernesto was asked by a parent, "What is the school's position regarding the secondary school students' decision not to attend class during the student protest planned for next week? Ernesto replied that when the students asked for permission to take part in the nationwide protest march, the school said no because they did not want the students to miss instructional time. However, he felt conflicted with his answer and wondered what he would do if they participated despite his injunction and what he would say to the parents if this happened. He was in a tight spot because he truly believed that one of the most important challenges for students in the 21st century was to develop critical thinking and the ability to express those thoughts.

### Overview

This case presents a difficult dilemma for the principal who must weigh student safety and in class learning with participation in a country-wide protest about which some students and parents may not agree.

### **Case Discussion Suggestions**

1. Given the personal nature of this dilemma, ask participants to reflect on their own leadership experiences and whether they had ever needed to institute a policy with which they did not agree.
2. Role playing would be effective approach to surface the arguments and the dilemma presented in this case. Ask participants to play the roles of Ernesto, Germain and Ernesto's son. Is there any middle ground to be established between protesting and not protesting?
3. A leader's role often requires negotiation skills. How would you as the school leader negotiate with the students? And what would you say to the parents?

## **TEACHING NOTE: CULTURAL INTEGRATION: A CHALLENGE INSIDE THE CLASSROOM**

### Case Synopsis

This case focuses on the experience of an academic coordinator at a technical-professional school enrolling students from 7th to 12th grades. The academic coordinator is attempting to improve the relationships between students from Chile and students from Perú (28% of the overall student body). Following a few small initial steps/strategies, the academic coordinator proposes to the school principal that an Expo Perú be created – as part of this proposed initiative, Chilean and Peruvian students would work together on projects to disseminate information about and celebrate Peruvian culture at the school.

### Overview

This case centralizes on a potentially controversial initiative proposed by an academic coordinator to improve the relationships between Chilean and Peruvian students in a school with a high proportion of Peruvian students. The fundamental question is to what degree should schools reflect the culture, ethnicities and/or nationalities of their students? Is it the role of schools to remain neutral or should they work to acknowledge and emphasize diversity?

### **Case Discussion Suggestions**

1. Cultural sensitivities are important in leading a school. How can a leader work to respect all cultural values without alienating one group's values? If you were the principal of this school, what would you do? Why? How do you develop a culture of mutual respect in a school?
2. Launching a public initiative like Expo Peru will be labor intensive and challenging. Is it worth it? What would success for the Expo Peru initiative look like?
3. How important is the support of the principal in the Expo Peru project? Should the academic coordinator pursue the idea without the approval of the principal?

## **TEACHING NOTE: TWO PERSPECTIVES**

### Case Synopsis

Juan is the new principal of a local public school serving students from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade; 100% of the students were of indigenous ancestry. Despite the existence of a Ministry of Education decree requiring cultural celebrations and related activities, parents and teachers at the school were reluctant to engage actively in such initiatives, preferring instead to focus on subjects and issues that were seen to be more useful and relevant to the current context and concerns of students. Juan reached out to teachers and parents at the school to attempt to better understand these conflicting perspectives.

### Overview

This case illustrates the challenges associated with clarifying roles and responsibilities in important curricular and co-curricular decisions in schools. The dilemma facing the principal in this case is how to balance sharply different perspectives and points of view regarding the issue of cultural inclusion and ancestral culture.

### **Case Discussion Suggestions**

1. What should Juan do? Why?
2. What specific role should educational authorities (municipal and national), the school principal, teachers, parents and students play in making decisions in this type of situation?
3. Is it appropriate to ask a community to cultivate acceptance of their ancestral culture as part of a school's curricular and co-curricular activities?
4. How should Juan handle the suggestion by certain families that the inclusion of ancestral rituals was the equivalent to worshipping 'false gods'?

## **TEACHING NOTE: TRAINING FOR WORK AND TRAINING FOR LIFE**

### Case Synopsis

Sergio, an experienced teacher, recently became the principal of a government-subsidized private secular school located in an urban municipality that was highly disadvantaged. The school, with a population of 1,000 boys from 1<sup>st</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, had as its purpose to provide an academic education with values that would enable the students to acquire the necessary skills to find jobs and contribute to their families' quality of life. As a new principal, Sergio faces resistance from the staff around issues of discipline.

### Overview

The role of the school head is the major topic in this case, especially for a new school head. To what degree should changes be made and how important is discipline in this school? The case offers a good opportunity to discuss the culture of a school and how, if necessary, it might be changed.

### **Case Discussion Suggestions**

1. Entering a new school, what steps should a school leader take initially? How soon should a school leader contemplate change?
2. Should a new school leader directly confront those who challenge him/her? How?
3. What should a new principal do to address prior tensions among staff? Ignore them, engage staff individually, or collectively?

## **THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL: WHAT ARE THE LIMITS?**

### Case Synopsis

Iván is a science teacher and technical head of a preschool to 12<sup>th</sup> grade school run by a Catholic congregation. Because of his reputation and good work, Ivan is contacted by a family foundation and offered a director's position in another, much larger vocational-technical education school in another city. This new school educates at-risk students. As a new leader, Ivan runs into a conflict with the board about whether some students should enter university instead of vocational positions upon graduation.

### Overview

This case opens up the question of the purpose of schooling. With a special population, is it appropriate to direct them into a vocational track rather than a university track? Also who should have the power to decide? The school director, the individual students and their families, or the board?

### **Case Discussion Suggestions**

1. Ivan finds himself in conflict with his board about the purpose of schooling for students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. How should one decide what is best for students?
2. What is the role of a school director to uphold the mission of a school, even if he does not agree with it?
3. At what age should students enter a technical-vocational school vs a college preparatory school?
4. What is the role of schooling in society?

## **Working with Multiple Stakeholders Including Boards**

## **TEACHING NOTE: CONFLICTING APPROACHES**

### Case Synopsis

Francisco is chief academic officer of a government-subsidized private school located in a working-class neighborhood in a southern city in Chile. The school focuses on providing an excellent education based on values, inclusion and teaching respect. Many special education students are included at the school.

Rita, a first grade teacher with much experience and success at the school is having a particularly difficult time with her class because there are so many students with special needs in the class. She also observed that out of 45 students, 8 did not meet the mandatory age requirement for first grade. She was requesting an aide so that other children in the class weren't held back.

Francisco took the request to the leadership and the owner denied the request for financial reasons.

### Overview

This case reflects the tension that a public school administrator faces trying to balance the needs of students and teachers. While it is important to accept all students and to teach them in different ways depending on their needs, can this approach reach a natural limit and exhaust the capabilities of even the most talented teacher?

### **Case Discussion Suggestions**

1. If there is no money for an extra teacher, what should Francisco ask for?
2. If you are a manager in the middle between teachers and owners, what is your role?
3. To whom does Francisco owe his allegiance: the teacher, the parents, the students, the owner?

## TEACHING NOTE: THE SOUND OF A BELL

### Case Synopsis

100% of the graduates of the Los Maitenes School, located in a small town in the center of Chile, attend higher education institutions upon graduation. Test scores for the 400 coed students are exemplary. Each member of the school's executive team has enjoyed a high level of autonomy in making decisions about their unit until the head found it necessary to overrule a decision made by the elementary coordinator. Questions are raised about the degree of autonomy for teachers and the smooth running of the entire school.

### Overview

This case explores the dilemma of accountability and autonomy. To what degree is conformity necessary for a smooth functioning school and what role should a school head play in achieving coherence in a school, particularly one that has been functioning well. Is a change necessary?

### **Case Discussion Suggestions**

1. School directors often espouse and attempt to enact faith and trust in their subordinates. However, when a subordinate makes a decision that goes against the culture of the school, the school head must intervene. What is the best way to do this?
2. When you disagree with the decision of a staff member who is your subordinate, what do you do?
3. When is it important to handle such issues privately. Is it ever appropriate to discuss decisions in public?
4. If a staff member is openly defiant to you, what do you do?

## **Leading Teacher Teams and Groups of Teachers**

**TEACHING NOTE: QUALITY FOR ALL OR FOR SOME?**Case Synopsis

Maria was the principal at a large pre-K-12 coeducational, government-subsidized private school located in a very disadvantaged neighborhood of southern Santiago that was known for its high volume of drugs and weapons trafficking. Despite these challenges the school had been improving in its national exam results until the current year when the scores fell. Maria led a conversation with her teachers exploring the question of why the scores fell.

Overview

School directors must set a tone of accountability without being overly critical of teachers, if the teachers appear to be working hard. How can a principal support teachers and still demand high results? Teachers also must understand their role in the overall well-being of the school and that both individual classroom results matter as well as overall school results. The case offers a nice opportunity to talk about the culture of a school.

**Case Discussion Suggestions**

1. What is the impact of poverty on learning? Must one solve the conditions of poverty before one can address academic learning goals?
2. Should students, who have severe behavior and emotional issues and who lack motivation and uninvolved parents, be allowed to stay in school and disrupt the learning of others? What is the school's obligation to these children?
3. How should a principal balance the demands made by difficult students on teachers with the teachers' well-being? Should difficult students be removed?
4. Does excellence need to be sacrificed for equity and a commitment to serve all students, regardless of background?

## **TEACHING NOTE: BUILDING A PATH FOR IMPROVING SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

### Case Synopsis

This case highlights the challenges involved in improving school culture through the modification of rules and regulations. A school principal who has been in her role for six months convenes a special meeting of the school's teachers to discuss possible changes/improvements to policies and procedures regarding student discipline. The principal and teachers engage in a contentious discussion of possible punishments for student discipline infractions. A specific proposal is offered to ask students who break existing rules and regulations to sweep the schoolyard and clean up the school as a punishment. Several teachers were concerned that this approach to punishment might not be an optimal strategy to encourage students to embody the school's core values and desired behaviors. The deliberations continue with no obvious resolution.

### Overview

This case highlights the challenges faced by a schools director and teachers in setting the rules and discipline policies that reflect the values and culture of the school. Deciding upon the nature of the discipline offers opportunities to decide whether rule infractions are to be punished or used as an opportunity to teach about community values and respect. If a school wishes to teach respect, is a punitive punishment the appropriate action?

### **Case Discussion Suggestions**

1. Leading discussions of challenging issues is an important role for school leaders. How would you evaluate the performance of the principal as a leader in this case? Do you think convening a special meeting of teachers to discuss the issue of student discipline a good idea? Why or why not?
2. Rules and Regulations convey a great deal about a school's culture and climate. Changing cultures of school can be a slow and challenging process.
3. What should the principal do to move the conversation of student discipline forward? And how does the principal respect the views of the teachers?

## **Leading Teachers**

**TEACHING NOTE: INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: SUCCESS FOR ALL OR SUCCESS FOR SOME?**Case Synopsis

This case focuses on the issue of inclusive education and the role parents and teachers play in how students with special needs are best supported. A group of parents at an elementary school in a small, semi-rural village requested a meeting with the school's principal to discuss concerns that one of the school's teachers was disregarding the needs of their children by being overly concerned about special-needs students. When the principal of the school communicated these concerns to the teacher in question, the teacher expressed strong disagreement with both the diagnosis of the problem and the proposed modifications in classroom practice.

Overview

This case focuses on the issue of inclusive education and the role parents and teachers play in how students with special needs are best supported inside the classroom. It raises the challenge of how trying to meet the needs of all children can sometimes result in no children's needs are met. What is realistic to expect of a teacher with 30 students in a class?

### **Case Discussion Suggestions**

Inclusive Education presents a significant challenge for teachers. Finding an approach to support teachers is very important.

What are the most effective ways for a school leadership team and its teachers to develop and execute an effective inclusive education strategy?

Parents also have an important role to play in determining the best approach to support their children. How can a school best communicate with parents about inclusive education?

With students, teachers and parents, data use can be powerful. Assessment and Evaluation.

How best can data be used? Is the use of data always helpful? When might it not be helpful?

How might this data be used to foster collaboration among teachers, parents, and students?

Taking action is an important role for the school leader. What should the principal and the teachers in this case do next? Why?

## TEACHING NOTE: A MATTER OF VOCATION

### Case Synopsis

Amanda had been the principal of a government-subsidized private school that enrolled students, ages 6-26 who were diagnosed with mental retardation, autism, brain damage and Down syndrome. Many of the students come from poverty and have suffered from detachment that led the children to manifest serious behavior problems. Breaking up a fight between two students, the principal needed to decide how to handle the academically gifted but emotionally disturbed perpetrator. The homeroom teacher of the students was new and unable to control the class

### Overview

This case explores the delicate balance a school director must strike between supporting a new teacher and ensuring that learning is occurring in every classroom. The emotional state of the teacher must be taken into consideration. The case illustrates the delicate balance often facing effective school leaders.

### **Case Discussion Suggestions**

1. This case presents the dilemma of caring for the individual student and the collective well-being of a class. At what point must one sacrifice one for the other?
2. How can a principal best support a new teacher who is having trouble with discipline in the classroom? Should the principal always remove difficult students?
3. How can a principal determine during the hiring process whether a new teacher will successfully manage a class? What kinds of questions should be included in the interview?
4. Is it possible that some students are so emotionally disturbed that they should not be educated in a school?

## **TEACHING NOTE: EDUCATION FOR ALL – OR ALMOST ALL?**

### Case Synopsis

Emilia is the principal of a small government-subsidized private preschool for children with social and emotional difficulties who also have trouble with comprehension and expression in their native language. One of her teachers, Lucero, is extremely successful in helping students with academic skills, but she does not address the students' social and emotional needs. Some parents feel she is cold and uncaring. Emilia wonders whether Lucero, who is the sister-in-law of the owner, should continue teaching at the school.

### Overview

This case presents some of the interpersonal challenges of being a school leader. How do you assess a teacher who achieves high results in one aspect of the teaching job, but fails in another area. The principal must assess which is more important and how to change a teacher's behavior.

### **Case Discussion Suggestions**

1. Despite several conversations about the emotional needs of children, Lucero insists that it is not the teacher's role to "love" the children. Do you agree?
2. Is academic achievement more important than meeting the socioemotional needs of special education students?
3. How should Emilia handle the complaints of the parents? Should she report them to the school owner? How?

## TEACHING NOTE: THE ELUSIVE DECISION

### Case Synopsis

Marcos was principal of a small public elementary school serving some 300 students up to grade six. Most of the students were from low-income families and were considered at-risk children, though their performance on regional and nationwide standardized tests was outstanding. Marcos faced a difficult choice between two staff members for a new important position of coordinator of student life.

### Overview

The case highlights the personnel issues that a school director must manage. How to decide between two internal candidates each of whom have special skills and strengths. Personnel decisions are some of the most important decisions school head can make and this case allows a healthy debate to occur with regard to this decision.

### **Case Discussion Suggestions**

This is a case about making personnel decisions within a small closely knit community. While the decision was supposed to be made by a committee, all of the committee members looked to the principal for the final say.

1. What is the best way for a school leader to engage other staff members in an important school decision? Should he talk to individuals privately or hold a public meeting?
2. What does shared decision making look like in a healthy school? Are shared decisions always possible and best?
3. What can a school leader do to ensure that all voices are heard?

## **TEACHING NOTE: NO WAY BACK**

### Case Synopsis

This case is based on the experience of an 11<sup>th</sup> grade philosophy teacher/head teacher in a K-12 public school enrolling 420 students. The teacher is challenged and quite troubled by an incident where he noticed that his briefcase had been opened and that money had been taken from his wallet (which he had left in the briefcase). The teacher had worked very hard to establish a trustworthy relationship with his students – as a result, this incident was especially disturbing to him. He decided to confront the students directly and invited them to discuss the issue among themselves and to return the money anonymously. He told the students that he would leave the classroom and return shortly.

### Overview

This case considers the teacher-student bond of trust and respect. What action should a teacher take when this bond is broken? Anger and discipline, or understanding and compassion? Can trust be restored?

**Case Discussion Suggestions**

1. The emotional and pedagogical bond between teachers and students is very important to successful learning. What does this case teach us about ways to establish trustworthy relationships between teachers and students?
2. Was the approach taken by the teacher in this case effective? Why or why not?
3. Teaching is an endeavor that engages and relies on the personal values of the teachers. How can the teacher in this case balance his own personal values regarding trust, respect, ethics, etc. with his actual practice as an educator?
4. What should the teacher do/say when he returns to the classroom? Why? What should the teacher do next if the money he thinks is missing is not returned?

## **TEACHING NOTE: A QUESTION OF ETHICS: STUDENTS VS. TEACHER**

### Case Synopsis

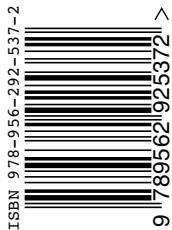
This case highlights the dilemmas faced by the principal of a school that serves 700 students from prekindergarten to 8<sup>th</sup> grade about a complaint filed by three 7<sup>th</sup> grade students about the personal conduct of the school's art teacher. The principal has met with members of the school's leadership team concerning the accusations and was seeking advice as to how to proceed. He decided to launch an investigation into the situation. However, in the middle of the investigation process, the art teacher informs the principal that he has decided to opt for an early retirement due to a psychiatric disability.

### Overview

This case explores the action of a school director in response to student complaints. How seriously should the school director consider such allegations? Should the principal share these allegations with the teacher before launching an inquiry? The case exposes the balance that a school director must strike among sometime competing stakeholders—in this instance the students and faculty.

**Case Discussion Suggestions**

1. A school leader sometimes must deal with highly sensitive and difficult situation concerning a teacher's reputation and well-being. How can a principal respect both the teacher's well bring and the concerns of students and parents?
2. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the principal's approach to this problem?
3. What might you have done differently in this case? Why?
4. What types of information should be shared with whom in difficult situations like the one describe in this case? When does confidentiality become essential?



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# Accomplished Leadership Series

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

NATIONAL BOARD ACCOMPLISHED  
PRINCIPAL STANDARDS

PSEL: Professional Standards for  
Educational Leaders

## About the Standards

National Board Standards for Accomplished Principals represent a professional consensus on the unique practices that distinguish accomplished principals. *The Accomplished Principal Standards* were identified by a committee of twenty-one independent expert educational leaders—teacher and administrator practitioners, researchers, academicians, business leaders, and policymakers—who identified what accomplished principals should know and be able to do. The resulting work of this forward-thinking group was validated and modified during a public review process to which over 2,500 individuals responded. The NBPTS Certification Council, a nine-member committee made up of two Board of Directors and seven external experts charged with oversight of National Board standards and certification, reviewed the standards and recommended them to the Board of Directors for approval.

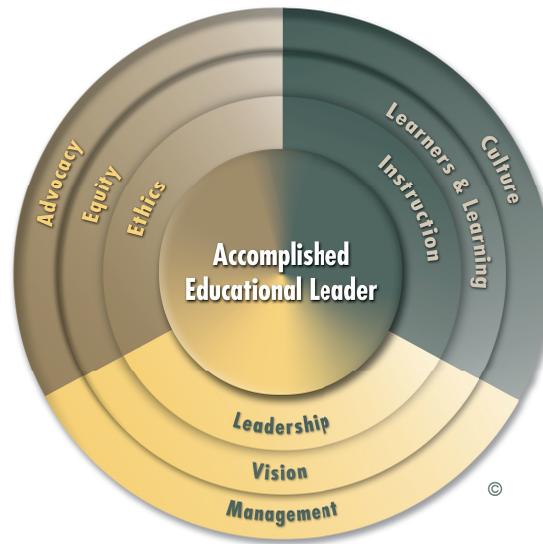
These standards are cast in terms of the collaborative actions these accomplished principals take to advance learning to the highest level for every child: to recruit, engage, promote, and retain accomplished teachers; to improve school culture and performance; to advocate for the profession and the needs of their school; and to purposefully engage families and the broader community in the school’s vision and mission. The standards reflect the nine Core Propositions for Educational Leaders, which form the foundation and frame the rich amalgam of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will characterize National Board Certified Principals.

NBPTS recognizes that accomplished principal practice appears in many forms and environments and that there is no single “right” way to be an accomplished principal leader. No linearity, atomization, or hierarchy is implied in this vision of accomplished principal practice, nor is each standard of equal weight. Rather, the standards are presented as aspects of accomplished principal practice that are analytically separable for the purposes of this standards document but are not discrete when they appear in practice. Such leaders draw on varying combinations of these nine standards as they reflect the skills, applications and dispositions of specific leadership roles and developmental levels. The combination of the standards differs for various types of leaders in myriad educational settings.

## Core Propositions for Educational Leaders

The Core Propositions for Accomplished Educational Leaders capture the essence of what accomplished educational leaders should know and do at a consistently high level. They define the essential elements of accomplished educational practice for leaders that establish a vision of the future. They are written in language that covers the multitude of contexts in which leaders act and positions that leaders hold, allowing for changes in educational structure, process, and technology. These core propositions address aspects of practice that carry equal gravitas with little overlap and are designed to stand the test of time.

The Core Propositions are the bedrock upon which the certifications for educational leaders are built. From them, stakeholders have crafted the specific, detailed *Accomplished Principal Standards* and will develop evidence-based assessments that will certify principals as accomplished. The core propositions define the fundamental skills, central applications, and overarching dispositions for such leaders. While accomplished educational leaders' practice must embody all nine core propositions, such leaders draw on varying combinations of these skills, applications, and dispositions to best meet the distinct demands of their learning communities.



### National Board Core Propositions for Accomplished Educational Leaders™

#### Skills

1. Accomplished educational leaders continuously cultivate their understanding of leadership and the change process to meet high levels of performance. **(Leadership)**
2. Accomplished educational leaders have a clear vision and inspire and engage stakeholders in developing and realizing the mission. **(Vision)**
3. Accomplished educational leaders manage and leverage systems and processes to achieve desired results. **(Management)**

#### Applications

4. Accomplished educational leaders are committed to student and adult learners and to their development. **(Learners & Learning)**
5. Accomplished educational leaders drive, facilitate, and monitor the teaching and learning process. **(Instruction)**
6. Accomplished educational leaders act with a sense of urgency to foster a cohesive culture of learning. **(Culture)**

#### Dispositions

7. Accomplished educational leaders model professional, ethical behavior and expect it from others. **(Ethics)**
8. Accomplished educational leaders ensure equitable learning opportunities and high expectations for all. **(Equity)**
9. Accomplished educational leaders advocate on behalf of their schools, communities, and profession. **(Advocacy)**

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## Introduction to Accomplished Principal Standards

Of the factors that are within the control of school, the quality of the teacher is the one thing that has been proven to have the most significant impact on the success of the student. Within the school site the leadership position of principal is the single most significant element in enabling the teacher to teach and the student to learn. As the teacher is to the classroom, the principal is to the school. As the teacher is to the students, the principal is to the adults<sup>1</sup>. When the principal is an accomplished leader, teachers and other staff are effective, parents are involved, the community is engaged, and most importantly, students learn.

Leadership matters. The results of accomplished educational leadership elevate our civic engagement, our economic resilience, and our commitment to our democratic ideals. Ultimately, the quality of life improves as people respectfully contribute and honor the contributions of others. Meeting the challenges of American democracy and global leadership requires a highly educated populace and thus the need for excellent schools led by accomplished principals. Accomplished principals create the conditions upon which these democratic ideals can flourish.

Leadership is complex. Teaching and learning take place in the context of complex interdependent human organizations, requiring a leader who possesses deep knowledge of education and sophisticated relationship skills. Accomplished principals balance this complexity. They are able to incorporate the art and science of leadership to orchestrate the diverse, demanding components of the organization. To the uninitiated, the underpinnings of effort, preparation, and prowess behind the accomplished principal's work are invisible and seamless.

Leadership is shared. Because of the complexity of the work, accomplished principals build leadership capacity in others and share leadership responsibility. Understanding the diverse strengths of students, teachers, staff, parents, and community members, accomplished principals enlist them to serve in leadership roles. The principal who has the courage to share leadership reaps the rewards of collective ownership, resulting in a more vital organization. Whereas the traditional role of principals relied on positional authority, accomplished principals distribute leadership as they engage others in

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<sup>1</sup> In this document, the term "adults" is used to represent all individuals in the learning community who are responsible for the students' education and well-being.

authentic processes designed to involve the perspectives and talents of many, including other members of their administrative team, teacher leaders, staff, and parents.

Leadership is proactive. Accomplished principals plan for success and seize opportunities. They leave nothing to chance. They neither shy away from challenges nor see themselves or their organizations as victims without options. They move forward with a sense of urgency, creating a culture of accountability where the norm for all is purposeful impatience. Accomplished principals consciously create a culture of collective effort, high expectations, high performance, and supportive structures. Accomplished principals transform schools into learning communities.

Leadership is leading learning. Accomplished principals are humble lead learners. They make their own learning a continuous and public part of the work of leading their school.

Leadership is leading by example. Through their actions, accomplished principals serve as a beacon and motivate each person to reach his or her greatest potential. They continually learn, model and mentor.

Leadership is visionary. When the National Board expanded the certification process to include principals, it moved from a model that focuses on one teacher at a time to a model that focuses on one school at a time. Accomplished principals see the value added to their organization by the integration of National Board Certification for themselves and their teachers. These principals know that true reform happens at the classroom level by accomplished teachers working in concert with accomplished principals and supported by all other adults who have a stake in the well-being of students. In the pursuit of educational reform, these principals purposefully review all proposed educational endeavors and select only those reforms that explicitly support the authentic work of their teachers.

Leadership is the pursuit of excellence. By having a clear vision, a belief in the power of education, and trust in the capacity of those they serve, accomplished principals pursue excellence. Accomplished principals hold themselves accountable to the values and beliefs of the organization and know that their behavioral congruence is a core component in their ability to lead well. Accomplished principals lead their schools to adopt or develop a clear framework for instructional practice. This framework provides a common language about instruction and serves as a touchstone for teacher conversation, instructional observation, and teacher feedback. Further, accomplished principals articulate a theory of action that is clear to teachers, staff, and parents to explain why specific strategies are brought to bear on the particular problems and context of their school.

These standards break new ground by creating benchmarks for performance at the highest level for accomplished principals. First and foremost, these standards are intended to define and describe accomplished leadership for school principals. They

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may also be used by individuals to raise their practice, by organizations and institutions of higher education for principal preparation programs, and by school districts and states for professional development of current principals. The standards presented here should be viewed as aspirational. To aspire is to be inspired, to stretch, and to dedicate oneself to reaching a distinguished goal. As the hallmark of accomplished principals across the country, these standards will elevate the work of all staff in the learning community and in the district and realize high performance for all students.

These standards exemplify the most important and lasting skills, applications, and dispositions of principals who operate at the accomplished level. Although each standard is significant and substantive on its own, the accomplished principal must understand how they interrelate and must demonstrate mastery of the whole. These standards represent the profession's fundamental values and principles and the best research available to date. They convey with absolute clarity what accomplished principals know and are able to do. Six strands—communication, collaboration, relationships, equity and diversity, data analysis, and technology—are woven throughout the standards. The overlap is purposeful because these strands are critical to all the standards.

These standards are intentionally written with the assistant principal in mind. Assistant principals may aspire to the level of accomplished practice outlined in these standards and pursue certification. However, realizing that the roles and responsibilities of the assistant principal depend on the individual school setting, assistant principals are encouraged to read the standards thoroughly before deciding if the certification process is applicable to them. Those who determine that these standards do apply to their work should consistently read the word “principal” as applying to them.<sup>2</sup>

The practices described here are grounded in practical experience and solid research. The examples are real, drawn from the experiences of the accomplished practitioners who served on the expert panel that developed the standards. The panel members, selected for their rich experiences and practical application of research, represented the diversity of settings, viewpoints, and approaches that characterize the educational profession. Members came from 17 states. They included principals and assistant principals working in elementary, middle, and high schools of all sizes, including charter schools and turn-around schools, as well as rural and urban schools. They included lead teachers and National Board Certified Teachers. They included researchers and policy experts, professors of higher education, and representatives of professional associations and teacher unions. Throughout the process, the members of the panel relied heavily on the Five Core Propositions of the National Board for teacher certification, knowing full well that what teachers should know and be able to do is inextricably linked to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the school principal.

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<sup>2</sup> While these standards apply both to principals and assistant principals, the assessments will be separate, requiring appropriate evidence specific to each role.

The quality of the teacher in the classroom is the determining factor in the student's achievement and learning. The quality of the principal in the school is the determining factor in the performance of the entire staff. Great principals recruit and develop great teachers; great teachers seek out and remain with great principals. The two combined create powerful learning communities in which students and adults reach their highest potential. Principals choose to lead so they can affect the highest performance of hundreds of teachers and thousands of students over the years in profound and positive ways.

# Accomplished Principal Standards Statements

## **Standard I: Leadership for Results**

Accomplished principals lead with a sense of urgency and achieve the highest results for all students and adults. They build organizational capacity by developing leadership in others. These dynamic, forward-thinking principals lead collaborative organizations that realize and sustain positive change that enhances teacher practice and improves student learning.

## **Standard II: Vision and Mission**

Accomplished principals lead and inspire the learning community to develop, articulate, and commit to a shared and compelling vision of the highest levels of student learning and adult instructional practice. These principals advance the mission through collaborative processes that focus and drive the organization toward the vision.

## **Standard III: Teaching and Learning**

Accomplished principals ensure that teaching and learning are the primary focus of the organization. As stewards of learning, these principals lead the implementation of a rigorous, relevant, and balanced curriculum. They work collaboratively to implement a common instructional framework that aligns curriculum with teaching, assessment, and learning, and provides a common language for instructional quality that guides teacher conversation, practice, observation, evaluation, and feedback. They know a full range of pedagogy and make certain that all adults have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to support student success.

## **Standard IV: Knowledge of Students and Adults**

Accomplished principals ensure that each student and adult in the learning community is known and valued. These principals develop systems so that individuals are supported socially, emotionally, and intellectually, in their development, learning, and achievement.

**Standard V: Culture**

Accomplished principals inspire and nurture a culture of high expectations, where actions support the common values and beliefs of the organization. These principals build authentic, productive relationships that foster a collaborative spirit. They honor the culture of the students, adults, and larger community, demonstrating respect for diversity and ensuring equity. They create and maintain a trusting, safe environment that promotes effective adult practice and student learning.

**Standard VI: Strategic Management**

Accomplished principals skillfully lead the design, development, and implementation of strategic management systems and processes that actualize the vision and mission. These principals lead the monitoring and adaptation of systems and processes to ensure they are effective and efficient in support of a high-performing organization focused on effective teaching and learning.

**Standard VII: Advocacy**

Accomplished principals effectively advocate internally and externally to advance the organization's vision and mission. These principals strategically seek, inform, and mobilize influential educational, political, and community leaders to advocate for all students and adults in the learning community.

**Standard VIII: Ethics**

Accomplished principals are ethical. They consistently demonstrate a high degree of personal and professional ethics exemplified by integrity, justice, and equity. These principals establish a culture in which exemplary ethical behavior is practiced by all stakeholders.

**Standard IX: Reflection and Growth**

Accomplished principals are humble lead learners who make their practice public and view their own learning as a foundational part of the work of school leadership. They are reflective practitioners who build on their strengths and identify areas for personal and professional growth. They adapt their paradigm and practice to result in improved student performance and enhanced teacher instruction through reflective practices.

## Standard I

# Leadership for Results

Accomplished principals lead with a sense of urgency and achieve the highest results for all students and adults. They build organizational capacity by developing leadership in others. These dynamic, forward-thinking principals lead collaborative organizations that realize and sustain positive change that enhances teacher practice and improves student learning.

Accomplished principals achieve positive results for students and adults. These principals measure performance results through qualitative and quantitative means. For example, with students they may assess engagement, attendance rates, test scores, or discipline referrals. With the adults the accomplished principal may assess levels of collaboration and the quality of classroom instruction. Accomplished principals embrace the responsibility of teacher and staff evaluation, offering support and guidance through consistent classroom visits and dialogue. Accomplished principals know that it is through deep professional conversation that teachers can learn and grow in their practice, and they use the evaluation process as one means to that end.

Accomplished principals willingly give of themselves to meet the high demands of a complex, evolving human organization. Although accomplished principals have the leadership skills to act independently, the most accomplished work interdependently developing the skills of others. These principals understand their strengths and their passions in relationship to their leadership role. They are self-directed leaders who monitor, manage, and motivate themselves and others. Accomplished principals balance the intellectual, emotional, and physical demands of leadership and demonstrate resilience.

Accomplished principals understand the complex and challenging task of effectively leading a learning community. These principals recognize that leadership must be shared and do so with those who have the requisite skills to lead, while also nurturing those skills in others throughout the organization, including capitalizing on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) and other accomplished teachers. These principals build leadership capacity in others to ensure the stability of the organization even in their absence.

To lead effective organizations, accomplished principals embody and strategically employ interrelated aspects of leadership that require a balance of substance and style. Accomplished principals demonstrate these aspects:

- achieving results
- leading by example
- thinking in a forward fashion
- thinking strategically
- working collaboratively
- leading change
- implementing ideas and changes strategically
- building organizational capacity

### **Achieving Results**

Accomplished principals believe that every student and adult will achieve his or her highest potential. They act in accordance with that belief by placing students at the core of all decisions. As part of the process, these principals set targets, address challenges, and analyze data to drive their decisions. These principals embrace accountability, holding themselves and others in the learning community accountable for positive results.

### **Leading by Example**

To lead others in accomplishing common goals and objectives, these principals demonstrate multiple dynamic attributes. They have integrity and consistently display behaviors that garner trust, respect, and the allegiance of the learning community. Accomplished principals are confident and tenacious in their pursuit of high standards, yet they bring a generous dose of humility to their role by making their own practice and continuous learning public, modeling the same professional growth expected of teachers and staff. This means accomplished principals are prepared to take risks as they relentlessly pursue their own growth as a foundational part of their work. They approach situations with courage and determination, while remaining flexible, inclusive, and open to new ideas.

Accomplished principals skillfully draw on personal insight and experience. They know how to choose and use appropriate strategies and skills in various situations to achieve successful student outcomes. When faced with a challenging or controversial decision that is in the best interests of academic achievement, these principals explain the context of the situation, provide background, and communicate transparently. They strive to reach consensus without compromising the interests of the parties involved. Accomplished principals have the courage to step into any situation and do what is best for students. For example, such a principal who is well versed in research may decide to

eliminate low-level classes, require that all students take grade-level courses, and support all efforts by teachers to provide appropriate interventions.

### **Thinking in a Forward Fashion**

Accomplished principals are knowledgeable about global trends. They understand and realize that forward thinking is paramount to preparing students, and the adults who serve their needs, for a global society. They advance the organization by exhibiting an entrepreneurial spirit, a pioneering attitude, a technologically innovative approach, and risk-taking that is grounded in reality. These principals are driven to push the organization to new heights to achieve strong student performance in the context of the learning community.

Accomplished principals recognize students as digital learners, with an unprecedented ability to access, acquire, and integrate information. Because technology is instrumental in bringing the world to the learner, these principals make it a priority to acquire and use state-of-the-art technologies to increase interconnectivity in the organization. They find ways to facilitate communication in the learning community and the world at large through multiple forms of media.

Realizing that students today will be the global citizens of tomorrow, accomplished principals raise students' awareness of the world around them. They arrange for students' exposure to multiple cultures. They know that forward thinking is not only about technology but also about capacities to adapt to a changing and more diverse world. Because it is impossible to predict with certainty the world in which today's students will function as adults, accomplished principals ensure that students develop the essential skills of problem solving, critical thinking, and collaboration to succeed in that future. As an example of such forward thinking, they might look at opportunities to bring in members of the business community to discuss the transferable skills that students need for flexibility in their careers. In addition, they might facilitate innovative ways to organize students and teachers for success. These principals know that preparation is not only about content but also about the skills needed to access emerging technologies and resources.

### **Thinking Strategically**

Accomplished principals are intentional strategic thinkers. They possess and maintain a deep knowledge of best practices and current research within and outside education. These principals plan in collaboration with their teams for high performance by diagnosing needs, designing solutions, prescribing actions, achieving results, and evaluating effectiveness. Accomplished principals explicitly articulate the link between selected strategies or solutions and the problems they are meant to address. They ensure that stakeholders can clearly understand why specific strategies are brought to bear



on the unique and particular problems in a school and on what basis they can be expected to succeed. In charting a course of action, accomplished principals pursue diverse opinions. They generate collective buy-in by strategically involving stakeholders in the process of continuous improvement. For example, they may use electronic systems to collect and sort feedback from stakeholders on a particular issue—such as student achievement, school safety, the budget, or the school improvement plan—and send updates to stakeholders.

Accomplished principals seek balance and congruency between the individual and organizational dimensions of the learning community. While cognizant of competing tensions in the organization, they diligently maintain the focus on the core business of learning. Accomplished principals understand their role as it relates to the governing body of the organization. When facilitating decision making that affects the entire organization, these principals explain and communicate how the individual systems and processes within and outside the learning community will mesh to support the decision—from classroom use to bus pickup to food service to district testing schedules. They consider the cascading effects of decisions, such as changes in exam schedules. Although such decisions may have unintended consequences, accomplished principals minimize and plan for such situations. They drive toward achieving instructional goals and focus the demands of the organization to this end.

### **Working Collaboratively**

Accomplished principals foster, encourage, celebrate, and honor multiple perspectives and voices, thereby creating an inclusive environment in which all are equally valued and energized in the pursuit of learning and increased student academic performance. They give priority to communication, exemplified by discussions that accelerate the work and the progress of the organization. By leveraging the power of relationships, including all stakeholders, and appropriately sharing leadership, these principals promote cohesion, collective effort, and cooperation to elevate organizational capacity. They inspire, motivate, and unite all stakeholders, within and outside the learning community so that the priorities of the larger community are reflected in the planning process. Accomplished principals position their own learning as a central element of their work and do so openly and give teacher reflection the same priority.

Accomplished principals seek opportunities to work with others in their extended organization as well as with the greater community. They understand the greater local, state, and national context in which their role and that of their organization exists. Because businesses, institutions of higher education, faith-based groups, and social organizations are integral to the learning community, these principals not only seek advice, input, and resources from such entities but also find ways for them to contribute to the well-being of the organization. Accomplished principals see value in and pursue

collaborative relationships with unions and other organizations that represent school personnel and with their building-level leaders.

Accomplished principals craft solutions to problems by working within the learning community, tapping the expertise and abilities of the staff to generate these solutions. For example, these principals may support and provide the resources for a group of teachers to work together to develop effective teaching strategies for targeted populations.

By empowering and engaging all individuals, accomplished principals gain commitment, focus effort, unify action, and enhance morale. These principals expertly promote formal and informal collaboration to achieve success in the learning community. For example, they may establish committees of internal and external stakeholders to provide guidance for initiatives and programs. Accomplished principals have the fortitude to know when to redirect efforts based on changing circumstances or goals. As a result, their organizations are imbued with a purposeful sense of urgency and unified around the mission of improving student learning.

### Leading Change

Accomplished principals lead change as they build sustainable organizations that are driven by the pursuit of excellence. They understand that change is continuous. These principals are firmly grounded in their understanding of change theory and apply it appropriately. They are aware of different change models and of the environment in which they operate. They are vigilant in scanning for opportunities that benefit all. Accomplished principals know who the key decision makers are, and they know how to initiate, implement, and sustain change while maintaining the stability of the organization. These principals know and anticipate where pressure points are and continuously apply positive pressure, so that the learning community is constantly learning and growing. They capitalize on opportunities to advance the vision and mission.

Accomplished principals tackle challenges. They skillfully negotiate with stakeholders within and outside the learning community. Outside the immediate learning community, for example, they might meet with those who resist change in order to engage and involve them in moving the learning community forward. Accomplished principals lay the groundwork before change occurs. Facilitating change and generating commitment to it is a critical focus of such principals. When facilitating change, these principals incorporate external and internal support. For example, they may help people understand the change from a letter-based grading system to a standards-based grading system by hosting focus groups, soliciting public comment, and engaging in community dialogue.

Accomplished principals understand the demand and capacity for change and are willing to take calculated risks for continuous improvement. To that end, they create cogent systems and processes that enable the organization to implement and sustain



change. These principals clearly convey how a change will enhance the performance of students and adults.

### **Implementing Ideas and Changes Strategically**

Accomplished principals skillfully realize the vision and mission of the learning community by turning words into actions. Working collaboratively, these principals communicate the vision in a way that enables others to see and understand their roles in achieving the mission. They ensure that instructional and operational systems are aligned to support the implementation of the vision, vigorously guarding against distractions and abandoning redundancies.

Working with others, accomplished principals not only set the right targets but also get the right results. They conduct constant critical analysis, asking “Are we focusing on the right thing to get us where we want to go?” To do so, they create systems to access real-time data and purposefully monitor progress toward goals. These principals gather, analyze, and leverage data to make sure decisions address organizational needs. For example, they look at social, emotional and academic learning; staff practice and performance; student attendance and referral rates, and transiency rates; and levels of parent participation to identify trends and establish priorities. They scan what is taking place in real time and make appropriate adjustments by constantly refining systems.

Accomplished principals are proactive, using data to anticipate and appropriately intervene, if necessary, rather than responding to failure. These principals correctly identify root causes for lack of performance and establish and monitor appropriate leading and lagging performance indicators. For example, weekly student referral rates may be a leading indicator of student suspension, which may be a lagging indicator of student grade-level retention. Accomplished principals work with teachers to use current data to assess where students are in a particular content area in the fall, instead of at the end of year, to keep students on track. Another example would be responding appropriately to quarterly and mid-year assessments of school safety.

Accomplished principals ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and explicitly linked to student learning and outcomes. They conduct difficult conversations when necessary and hold themselves and others accountable for results. In those conversations, they bring about clarity, thus sharpening the focus on the purpose of action and its contribution to student achievement. These principals foster confidence, credibility, and trust by ensuring that their decisions and actions are transparent, inclusive, and consistent with the organization’s vision and mission.

### **Building Organizational Capacity**

Accomplished principals realize that the strength of an organization lies in its human capital. They understand that the effectiveness of teachers directly correlates with

increased student performance. These principals take the primary responsibility for attracting, retaining, and developing high-quality teachers and other staff. These principals clearly identify and nurture the efforts, skills, and attitudes necessary for all to achieve the organization’s mission and demonstrate the efficacy of the teaching methods in student performance. These principals communicate expectations and are courageous in holding everyone accountable—especially themselves. They value and respect the strengths of individuals, and they create support systems to maximize the performance and retention of the right people. Accomplished principals create and maintain a positive work environment in which people improve their knowledge and develop their skills, so that they enhance the work that they do with students.

Accomplished principals cultivate the varying talents of everyone within the organization. These principals consciously seek to develop leadership capacity throughout the organization by ensuring that different lateral experiences and promotional opportunities exist. They develop the capacity of others through training, guided practice, and mentoring. As they do so, teachers and staff take on more responsibility and more roles—formal and informal—that involve leadership. For example, these principals would capitalize on the expertise of accomplished teachers, particularly National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs), to work with colleagues. As another example, when leading the organization to a structure of small learning communities, such a principal would provide professional development for teachers who are going to assume the role of leading cross-content-area teams. This principal would also provide professional development to support teachers in acquiring the appropriate skill set for working with adults. Additionally, an accomplished principal might develop the supervisory skills of a custodian, enabling the custodian to move from doing his or her own job well to leading others in doing their jobs well.

Accomplished principals design and implement succession plans—for every position in the organization—that allow for leadership and growth. They provide for sustainability and stability by ensuring that the organization has a depth of talent to move the learning community forward.

## Reflections on Standard I

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## Standard II Vision and Mission

Accomplished principals lead and inspire the learning community to develop, articulate, and commit to a shared and compelling vision of the highest levels of student learning and adult instructional practice. These principals advance the mission through collaborative processes that focus and drive the organization toward the vision.

Accomplished principals are visionary leaders who put students first. Central to their vision and mission is the belief that all students and adults will perform at high levels. These principals direct, guide, and empower stakeholders to prepare each student to thrive in the present and to have the skills and dispositions to shape his or her future. In the learning communities of accomplished principals, the vision and mission are more than written words; their influence is seen, heard, and felt in the classrooms, in the hallways, on the playgrounds and playing fields, and in the community.

In collaboration with stakeholders, accomplished principals lead the development of the vision and mission. They encourage the creativity and flexibility in strategies that will make improved student learning a reality. They communicate with and engage all stakeholders in a compelling manner, transforming the environment and attitude from one of compliance to one of shared commitment and shared responsibility.

Accomplished principals consistently articulate the collective vision and promote an attainable mission to advance teaching and learning, resulting in increased student performance. In doing so, they recognize ownership of the vision by all stakeholders. Employing appropriate strategic management tools, these principals fully realize stated goals and objectives related to the mission.

Accomplished principals advance the vision and the mission through

- collaborative design and development
- implementation and realization
- reflection, public learning, and recommitment
- championing the vision and mission



### **Collaborative Design and Development**

Accomplished principals collaboratively work with stakeholders to create a shared vision and mission that is relevant and compelling to the present and the future of the organization and aligned with the district requirements. These visionary leaders inspire others to embrace their roles and responsibilities in the creation and pursuit of the vision and mission. To that end, they make certain that teachers, students, and all stakeholders, including those who are less vocal, are heard and are included in the process. Accomplished principals establish a culture in which diverse points of view are encouraged and valued in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the vision and mission. For example, these principals may hold community-based forums with subsets of stakeholders to get their input on initiatives and to engage them in the actualization of the vision and mission.

Accomplished principals communicate with both internal and external stakeholders to keep the vision in the forefront. These principals bring people into the act of determining goals, objectives, and action steps to support the mission. They incorporate input from external partners who have human, fiscal, and material resources and work collaboratively to support the learning community—including parents, faith-based groups, businesses, higher education institutions, and legislators.

Because accomplished principals realize that strong home-school connections are critical to achieving the mission, they intentionally engage parents, guardians, and community networks for direct involvement in student learning. Using traditional and non-traditional settings, these principals find creative ways to connect with stakeholders and set up opportunities to gather input from parents and from community, business, and municipal leaders. These principals continuously communicate with and engage all stakeholders about the direction required to achieve and evolve the goals of the mission. To do so, accomplished principals may use multiple mediums, such as print, digital, or in-person interactions.

### **Implementation and Realization**

Accomplished principals ensure that the collaboratively developed mission is equitable and easily translated into actions. These principals recognize that stakeholders must be able to articulate the mission. More importantly, stakeholders must fully understand their roles and responsibilities for incorporating the mission into the culture of the learning community.

Accomplished principals understand that to be effective, a vision and a mission must be supported by a strategic implementation plan. Through ongoing training, these principals ensure that all teachers, staff members, and other stakeholders have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to execute the action steps and achieve the goals in that plan. For example, they may meet with bus drivers to make them aware of their

impact on student attitudes and behavior, and offer training and strategies, followed by ongoing dialogue and support. These principals ensure that all actions in the learning community strengthen the instructional program and are consistent with the vision and mission.

Accomplished principals identify and anticipate obstacles to the achievement of the vision and mission and work to overcome them. They capitalize on those opportunities as teachable moments, not only to refine the plan and make necessary mid-course corrections but also to enhance a culture of teamwork, cohesion, credibility, and trust.

### **Reflection, Public Learning and Recommitment**

Accomplished principals actively and continuously monitor progress toward achievement of the vision and mission. On an ongoing basis, they collaboratively review progress related to goals and benchmark data, making necessary adjustments to the plan to keep the organization moving forward. Accomplished principals make this reflection and learning process public, approaching challenges with an attitude of inquiry. From this analysis, they incorporate the voices of stakeholders to make decisions that lead to change and improvement in student performance and teacher practices. These principals collaboratively refine goals and establish new benchmarks as the organization progresses toward achieving the mission.

Accomplished principals persistently keep stakeholders focused on the goals of the plan. They prioritize appropriately and relentlessly. These principals use time, systems, and personnel effectively, so that day-to-day distractions do not deter from the achievement of the mission and the core business of the organization. They regularly initiate professional conversations and engage in discussion to determine whether the organization—and their own practice—is on target. They share new information to empower, encourage, and enlighten stakeholders, thereby reinforcing commitment. These principals initiate discussions to encourage stakeholders to review, revise, and improve actions they take toward achieving goals. For example, after discovering from a root-cause analysis of data that students are underperforming on the writing section of a literacy test, an accomplished principal might establish an initiative through which teachers in all content areas create plans to infuse writing skills into their instruction.

### **Championing the Vision and Mission**

As the vision keepers for their learning communities, accomplished principals garner internal and external support. They strategically identify when and how they communicate the vision and mission. These principals articulate a compelling message that communicates the vision for the present and the future of the learning community. Their messages paint a clear picture of the values and beliefs embodied in the culture of the learning community and communicate a sense of focus and urgency. The messages





## Standard III

# Teaching and Learning

Accomplished principals ensure that teaching and learning are the primary focus of the organization. As stewards of learning, these principals lead the implementation of a rigorous, relevant, and balanced curriculum. They work collaboratively to implement a common instructional framework that aligns curriculum with teaching, assessment, and learning, and provides a common language for instructional quality that guides teacher conversation, practice, observation, evaluation, and feedback. They know a full range of pedagogy and make certain that all adults have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to support student success.

Teaching and learning are central to the work of accomplished principals. Every thought, every word, and every action focuses and engages all stakeholders to further learning and to establish a learning environment that develops the whole student. These principals instill a purposeful sense of urgency throughout the learning community, resulting in high performance on the part of each student and adult.

Accomplished principals consciously advance teaching and learning as the core business of the organization. They oversee the planning and development of the curriculum, lead its implementation, develop systems to evaluate its effectiveness, and make adjustments as necessary. These principals develop a comprehensive learning experience with rigorous and relevant academic programming that aligns the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment practices, providing a variety of opportunities for all students to reach learning goals. They collaboratively set high expectations for all students, staff, and community members and create opportunities for every student and adult to meet those goals. To maintain high standards, accomplished principals continually ask the questions, “Who is learning and why?” and “Who is not learning, why not, and what are we going to do about it?”

Accomplished principals focus on teaching and learning by

- planning for learning
- collaboratively implementing curricula
- continuously monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting performance



### **Planning for Learning**

Accomplished principals ensure that the instructional program is relevant and forward-thinking. They act on the imperative that students must be prepared for a future of undetermined challenges and needs; thus these principals ensure that the curriculum is rich with experiences that will develop students' capacity for living in, working in, and contributing to a global society. They guarantee that classroom experiences include many opportunities for problem solving, critical thinking, and social learning and meet diverse, targeted learning needs.

Accomplished principals collaborate with others to ensure that materials, support, and training are relevant and appropriate, incorporate high expectations, and reflect a balanced curriculum. These principals know how to access and use the professional expertise in the networks within and outside the learning community. They may work through partnerships with civic and community groups to ensure that teachers, staff, and students have access to and support for the use of appropriate technology, instructional materials, and resources.

Accomplished principals effectively communicate the focus on learning and engage support for the learning process. Accomplished principals actively engage all stakeholders in formal and informal dialogue, building a sense of urgency and ownership in the pursuit of established learning goals. Their communication is interactive: they seek and welcome feedback and input from diverse sources, with the aim of continuously improving learning.

Accomplished principals work with staff members to ensure they are proficient in culturally relevant practices and in the consistent infusion of technology. Because these principals understand that curricula are not classroom dependent, they help staff members reach beyond the classroom to provide diverse opportunities. These principals involve and engage the community and its resources in the work of the learning organization. For example, these principals might arrange externships, link to university and skill center programs, or develop online learning facilities. They may use online learning tools to provide access to courses that enrich the curriculum, to enhance academic rigor and relevance.

### **Collaboratively Implementing Curricula**

Accomplished principals lead the implementation of a balanced, rigorous, relevant, diverse, and standards-based curriculum. These principals apply their thorough understanding of the complexity of pedagogy to support teachers in making informed choices about matching instructional strategies to the curriculum.

Accomplished principals identify and creatively minimize or eliminate barriers and obstacles to learning. They structure time and resources to support teachers to work collaboratively in examining student work, in holding professional conversations, and

in adjusting their teaching practices accordingly. These principals empower others to solve challenges to learning. They know what questions to ask, how to help people answer their own questions, and how to problem solve, whatever the situation might be. Accomplished principals understand adult learning theory and employ a variety of strategies that are appropriate to the intended outcomes. Understanding that staff members are on a continuum of development, accomplished principals provide thoughtful support for all staff members at every stage of practice. They do this by building relationships, developing common understandings of effective teaching practices, and communicating clear expectations of performance.

Accomplished principals are consistently present where teaching and learning occur. They model, coach, and mentor in order to support others to grow in their practice. For example, these principals use regular, structured classroom visits with timely, meaningful feedback on performance as one method of participating in observations of teaching and learning.

These principals provide teachers with professional learning that is aligned with the vision, goals, and objectives of the organization. They continually evaluate the learning opportunities provided to staff members and listen to staff members to ensure that professional learning meets individual needs and improves student learning. They design structures so teachers can systematically and regularly observe each others' work and share effective practices. These principals learn from teachers' experiences and use the findings to shape and influence professional development.

Accomplished principals identify individual teachers' needs and provide appropriate strategic support. Peer support might include a well-crafted program for teacher induction and mentoring, professional learning opportunities matched to the various stages of teachers' professional careers, and new roles and leadership opportunities for experienced staff members.

### **Continuously Monitoring, Evaluating, and Adjusting Performance**

Accomplished principals identify and use a variety of methods and measures to analyze performance. They articulate a clear theory of action to explain why strategies are expected to lead to desired results and to identify sources of evidence that are acceptable markers of success. Accomplished principals know what information to seek, how to gather it, and how to analyze it to make informed decisions that support high levels of performance. They are skilled in disaggregating and interpreting data for the purpose of analyzing areas of strength and growth and determining paths to improvement in learning. These principals are adept at assisting teachers with analyzing data and identifying opportunities for improvement and for sustaining successes. For example, accomplished principals who perceive a gap in the instructional program might design a structure to allow teachers to align content with state standards. Such principals would



encourage teachers to take the process to the next level by creating an action plan for teaching week by week throughout the school year and then providing feedback to the principal. Accomplished principals empower teachers to change their classroom practices to adapt content in ways that enhance student learning.

Accomplished principals collaborate with others to collect and analyze information from multiple sources—qualitative and quantitative, formative and summative. For example, they work with leadership teams or horizontal and vertical teams to keep data as a focus on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. They use these data to monitor and evaluate student performance and to inform teacher practice at the classroom level. In addition, accomplished principals look at teacher practices through the same multiple formats with which they encourage teachers to look at students. These formats include formal and informal classroom observations, student work evaluations with teachers, and comprehensive evaluation conferences.

Accomplished principals ensure the attainment of student and adult learning goals. If goals are not met, these principals do what is necessary to identify the causes and work collaboratively to seek and implement remedies. They ensure that appropriate interventions are consistently provided for students and adults who are not meeting targeted goals, without compromising the opportunity for all to engage in the full program of the learning community.

Accomplished principals demonstrate transparency by continually communicating the results of individual students' and school-wide performance. They make sure that the academic progress of the learning community is visible and accessible. Progress may be displayed internally, for example, in charts and graphs for staff use. External displays of progress may include examples of students' achievements in academics, the arts, and athletics. These principals lead the celebration of the attainment of learning goals.

## Reflections on Standard III

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## Standard IV

# Knowledge of Students and Adults

Accomplished principals ensure that each student and adult in the learning community is known and valued. These principals develop systems so that individuals are supported socially, emotionally, and intellectually, in their development, learning, and achievement.

Accomplished principals are keenly aware that building relationships is fundamental in establishing a positive learning environment. They value people as individuals. In the interest of valuing students and adults, these principals create systems and procedures that address the development, contexts, support needs, and accomplishments of both students and adults. They ensure that every student is connected consistently in meaningful ways with at least one caring adult advocate and that every adult is connected in meaningful ways with other adults.

In order to know students and adults well, accomplished principals create structures that involve the following:

### Students

- understanding of child and adolescent development
- understanding of home structures
- scaffolding community support
- celebrating student accomplishments

### Adults

- understanding of human development and learning theory
- understanding of adults in a broader context
- scaffolding support
- celebrating adult accomplishments

### STUDENTS

Accomplished principals ensure that each student is known and valued. Regardless of the focus, size, demographics, or grade configuration of the learning community, these principals purposefully and intentionally design and implement systems and

procedures to engage each student. Accomplished principals communicate the resulting information to the staff. For example, they may create face-to-face or digital systems that enable horizontal and vertical teams to meet regularly to discuss students and problem solve for their benefit. To assure that every student has a consistent relationship with an adult, they may establish an advisory system, smaller learning communities within the larger one, or other support systems.

### ***Understanding of Child and Adolescent Development***

Accomplished principals are well versed in child and adolescent development theory and proven research. They anticipate and address students' emotional, psychological, and social needs and ensure that programs are in place to meet those needs. These principals empower students to become responsible and advocate for their own learning. They instill high expectations in students, so that students will have high aspirations for themselves and a personal sense of efficacy.

Accomplished principals make certain that each student is known as an individual with unique needs and strengths. They ensure that every student feels like an integral part of the learning organization and understands how their learning is important to themselves and to others. These principals reach out and make sure that opportunities exist for all students to feel that they belong, especially those who may be disengaged.

### ***Understanding of Home Structures***

Accomplished principals understand how integral the student's home environment is to his or her development. These principals appreciate the family and social dynamics of each student. They recognize each student as a member of a family or a personal network and as a community member. They honor diverse home structures and recognize the challenges some structures pose. These principals recognize potential bias in the learning community and intervene when practices may marginalize students. For example, for students who may not have a place to do their homework in the evening, these principals might establish opportunities to complete homework at alternative times and locations.

Accomplished principals capitalize on the strengths of families and personal networks, while providing interventions, support, and resources to meet students' needs. These principals create a system within the learning community to increase meaningful family involvement. For example, they might create a room with digital and print resources where parents or guardians can access information to support their children or their own learning. Accomplished principals create a culture in which parents or guardians feel welcome and essential to the learning environment. These principals may arrange for meetings with parents and guardians at flexible times and in such convenient locations as restaurants, apartments, or community centers.

***Scaffolding Community Support***

Accomplished principals understand the spectrum of student background and contexts and scaffold supports to respond to that diversity accordingly. These principals may enlist social programs, civic and community organizations, and faith-based groups as well as informal supports to provide resources to meet students' needs. Examples might include connecting students with programs that meet such needs as after-school food sources, health care services, employment opportunities, social services, and educational services.

***Celebrating Student Accomplishments***

Accomplished principals recognize and celebrate students' accomplishments. These principals create multiple opportunities for ongoing recognition of each student, whether through awards ceremonies, bulletin boards, broadcast announcements, or other means. They recognize and support each student to become confident as individuals and learners and to take ownership of and have pride in their learning community.

**ADULTS**

Accomplished principals ensure that each adult is known and valued. Regardless of the focus, size, demographics, or configuration of the learning community, these principals deliberately design and implement systems and procedures to engage each adult. They intentionally and purposefully build trusting relationships, enabling them to have conversations that are courageous and honest.

Accomplished principals actively listen, observe, and value the power of meaningful communication with adults. They understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across diverse cultures. These principals stay abreast of the personal and professional interests of staff members. They establish routines that foster rich relationships in which all have the opportunity to interact. These opportunities may include one-on-one conferences and other formal and informal interactions.

***Understanding of Human Development and Learning Theory***

Accomplished principals apply their understanding of adult learning theory and human development, acknowledging what each person brings and how each person's social construct affects the learning environment. These principals create organizations of high purpose and energy. Accomplished principals ensure that each adult is an appreciated, contributing member. Accomplished principals create and maintain both formal and informal structures in order to foster positive relationships among adults.

Accomplished principals appreciate each individual's unique needs and strengths and consider him or her when planning activities and events. These principals ensure that every adult feels like an integral part of the learning community and

understands how his or her learning is important to them personally and to others. They differentiate staff members' professional development based on interests, needs, and technological expertise.

Accomplished principals reinforce high expectations for adults, so adults will have high aspirations for themselves and a personal sense of efficacy. For example, adults who feel a sense of belonging might collaborate with peers to create new classes or teaching arrangements.

### ***Understanding of Adults in a Broader Context***

Knowing that a well-grounded faculty is the hallmark of an effective learning environment, accomplished principals support personnel in balancing the demands of the work environment, the home environment, extracurricular activities, and professional study. They do this by establishing relationships with everyone in the building. For example, these principals are aware of key events and dates that are meaningful to individual staff members. Accomplished principals recognize and acknowledge their own obligations and limitations in nurturing relationships. They do not show bias or favoritism.

Accomplished principals work to maintain relationships by being visible throughout the building, by making a concerted effort to converse daily with staff members, and by being familiar with the family dynamics of the staff. For example, they may facilitate social events at which families can get to know one another. They provide support as needed in individual circumstances. When assigning duties, they consider personal circumstances and make appropriate individual accommodations available when it does not negatively affect the learning environment.

### ***Scaffolding Support***

Accomplished principals understand that adults function in a world beyond the learning community. Therefore, these principals support adults by scaffolding resources from social, civic, community, and faith-based groups. They know individuals well enough to understand why a particular adult may not be performing well, and whether that person needs assistance. These principals understand that underperformance may occur because of a variety of professional and personal factors and counsel individuals when they perceive changes in demeanor or performance. For example, these principals might help locate resources for a teacher experiencing financial difficulties because of a family member's illness or a spouse's job loss.



## Standard V Culture

Accomplished principals inspire and nurture a culture of high expectations, where actions support the common values and beliefs of the organization. These principals build authentic, productive relationships that foster a collaborative spirit. They honor the culture of the students, adults, and larger community, demonstrating respect for diversity and ensuring equity. They create and maintain a trusting, safe environment that promotes effective adult practice and student learning.

Accomplished principals inspire and nurture a culture that is the heart of the learning community. They are passionately committed to creating and leveraging a culture where every student and adult reaches his or her full potential. These principals foster relationships, encouraging each person who participates in the culture to embody the values, attitudes, and behaviors that the organization acts on and celebrates. Accomplished principals understand that collaboration, collegiality, and efficacy permeate an effective culture of high expectations for student learning.

Accomplished principals create and maintain a learning culture that promotes

- high expectations
- collaborative and collegial relationships
- rituals and behaviors that demonstrate common values and beliefs
- respect for cultural differences, diversity, and equity
- a safe and trusting environment

### High Expectations

Accomplished principals build a culture of high expectations for student learning and adult practice. They skillfully shepherd and intentionally navigate all elements of the learning community to develop a collective sense of high expectations, resulting in a high-performing organization where all students learn. These principals lead the creation of a culture that generates excitement, encourages innovation and experimentation, and develops commitment—making continuous improvement and maximum effort the norm. Accomplished principals safeguard a culture that values individuals, strives

for maximum learning for students and adults, and structures a productive and orderly environment.

Accomplished principals lead and model a culture that permeates all facets of the learning organization and extends beyond the campus, inspiring others to get involved. In the learning communities of accomplished principals, the culture is so strong that it is manifested in student behavior on and off campus. For example, if local business owners complain about student behavior, an accomplished principal might empower the students to develop their own code of conduct in collaboration with the business owners.

Accomplished principals nurture a culture that focuses on learning for students, staff, parents, and members of the community at large, one that values all human capital in shaping a learning environment that best suits the needs of all students and stakeholders and the demands of a global society. These principals model entrepreneurship; they access and capitalize on the resources of parents and the community.

Recognizing that culture is the medium through which change is initiated and sustained, accomplished principals skillfully embrace change that complements and advances the culture of the organization. They understand that change for the sake of change is meaningless, adds no value, and will not stand the test of time. When faced with a mandated change, they expertly guide implementation in a way that enhances rather than detracts from the culture.

### **Collaborative and Collegial Relationships**

Accomplished principals foster a culture that emphasizes a collaborative spirit within the learning community. These principals embrace, value, and capitalize on the uniqueness of individuals represented in the learning community. They build and foster positive and productive relationships. These principals work with all stakeholders to create and sustain a positive and caring sense of community that everyone can hear, see, and feel in all interactions. All partners productively engage in creating and sustaining a school with student learning as the focus. There is a strong culture of support for students, where teachers work together to achieve high performance.

Accomplished principals establish trust through teamwork and consensus building. These principals shape and maintain a culture in which adults and students demonstrate personal responsibility. They foster an environment that values effort, persistence, and engagement by all students and staff. High expectations lead to better performance by students, teachers, and everyone else in the learning community.

### **Rituals and Behaviors that Demonstrate Common Values and Beliefs**

In collaboration with adults and students, accomplished principals develop agreed-upon cultural values and norms that are consistent with the vision and mission of the

organization. They expect congruence between the stated values and norms and the actions of the students and adults. These principals form an organizational culture in which adults teach and model the essentials of good character. They unfailingly address individuals who act contrary to the norms by initiating critical conversations designed to maintain a cohesive culture of learning. These principals work with stakeholders to develop a culture that honors the existing and evolving values, beliefs, norms, traditions, and rituals of the learning community. They promote ownership and involvement in all phases of establishing and maintaining such a culture.

Accomplished principals constantly monitor the pulse of the culture. They build systems that incorporate qualitative and quantitative data to monitor and assess the culture, gathering such data through formal and informal means. They use data to initiate critical discussions aimed at enhancing adult practices and student behaviors that are necessary for a trusting, effective culture.

### **Respect for Cultural Differences, Diversity, and Equity**

Accomplished principals collaboratively establish and implement policies, systems, and procedures that promote respect for diverse cultures, ethnicities, and lifestyles, including under-represented segments of the learning community. They engage all members of the learning community in processes that identify values and behaviors related to eliminating bias, intolerance, and inequity. Within established policy, these principals build and maintain a culture that fosters a free exchange of ideas and opinions without fear of retribution.

Accomplished principals respect the cultural differences in a global society and make diversity a means for enriching the culture of the learning community. They work to establish a culture in which students find relevancy and are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to succeed. In the learning communities of accomplished principals, diversity is celebrated as a strength and as a tool for learning and growing. Accomplished principals analyze and monitor classroom activities and assignments for cultural sensitivity and relevance. Accomplished principals respect elements of student culture that support and are relevant to the learning environment. For example, they recognize that students may use multiple forms of technology for building relationships, communicating, and learning. These principals encourage taking responsibility and provide opportunities for bridging the differences among students' culture, parents' culture, and staff members' culture for the betterment of the learning environment.

Accomplished principals understand that all students need role models and advocates with whom they can relate. When some groups are not represented by the staff, for example, these principals reach out into the community to find volunteers to fill this need.



## Standard VI

# Strategic Management

Accomplished principals skillfully lead the design, development, and implementation of strategic management systems and processes that actualize the vision and mission. These principals lead the monitoring and adaptation of systems and processes to ensure they are effective and efficient in support of a high-performing organization focused on effective teaching and learning.

Accomplished principals are strategic managers as well as instructional leaders. They continuously pursue the optimal performance of the complex learning organization. These principals create transparent systems that bolster the sustainability and success of the organization, focused on results and consistent with beliefs and values. These systems are organized for student and staff success in achieving the school's goals of high performance.

Accomplished principals provide organizational oversight and coherent management to carry out the organization's mission. To that end, these principals lead the identification, orchestration, and monitoring of all aspects of operations, from instruction to the use of human and financial capital, to the physical plant and the legal aspects and administration of policies and procedures.

Accomplished principals know and understand the legal rights and responsibilities of students and staff. These principals know that professional knowledge and sensitivity to areas of potential litigation are vital to successful leadership. With increasing decision-making authority vested at the school building level, there is a great need for principals to behave in a legally defensible manner and to know what these behaviors look like.

Accomplished principals demonstrate knowledge of good financial planning and facility management. These principals recognize the importance of budgeting instructional monies, managing the physical environment, and effective fiscal accounting to accomplish its goals as a learning organization.

Accomplished principals develop human resource management processes that are aligned with both local and federal policies and regulations. This requires knowledge of personnel law, collective bargaining when applicable, organizational policy, administrative theory, and an understanding of staff recruitment, selection, development, and performance appraisal practices.

Accomplished principals apply their knowledge, skills, and selected tools to design appropriate and sustainable strategic management systems. These principals create conditions for success through organizational and management practices that effectively support learning and instructional performances, create clarity and trust, organize staff time effectively, and are strong on implementation, operations, and project management. They know when, why, and how to use these systems effectively and build internal capacity to sustain them.

Accomplished principals maximize the focus on instruction by developing systems that operate smoothly and preserve the integrity of the learning environment. They keep the entire organization focused on results and functioning at high levels of efficiency and effectiveness through their use of strategic management systems and processes. These principals demonstrate how a well-managed building contributes to effective teaching and learning.

Accomplished principals develop strategic management systems that reflect the following steps:

- design and development: plan
- implementation: do
- monitoring: check
- continuous improvement: act

### **Design and Development: Plan**

Accomplished principals lead the development of goals and objectives that are in line with the vision and mission. Those goals are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-specific. To reach these goals, they cultivate and advance management structures to sustain all the elements required for the organization to realize its learning goals, from human and fiscal resources to student achievement, student safety, and building management, leaving nothing to chance.

In doing so, accomplished principals manage the collective expertise at their sites to skillfully design and proactively craft systems and processes essential to maintaining highly effective organizations. They collaboratively lead the development of management structures that engender ownership, commitment, and transparency. These structures support accomplished principals in collaborating, communicating, and responding with foresight, intention, and efficiency.

Mindful of the disparate yet interrelated and interdependent aspects of the organization, accomplished principals make decisions understanding how systems affect one another. These principals collaborate with external and internal stakeholders to make informed decisions aimed at minimizing unintended consequences. For example, they are aware that a decision to adopt a new schedule will affect other systems, such as teacher planning time, state testing, lunch and bus schedules, and professional development, and they plan accordingly.

As part of the design and development process, accomplished principals properly orient all stakeholders to the need for strategic systems. These principals establish common language, understanding, and work norms. They implement strategic management systems that are calculated to support student learning by ensuring role clarity, enhancing organizational discipline, and increasing accountability for results.

### **Implementation: Do**

Accomplished principals realize that effective implementation of systems will result in the alignment of goals, objectives, and resources and purposefully connect systems and processes. They continually reflect on whether the systems are being implemented as designed. These principals monitor goals and objectives to determine if they are achieved, and if so, are according to timelines and benchmarks and within budget. On the basis of their findings, these principals work collaboratively to identify solutions, define roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders, and establish expectations for performance and improvement.

Accomplished principals ensure that communication about systems and stakeholder access and utilization occurs on a timely basis. They strategically conduct public meetings and provide training for all internal and external stakeholders. For example, when introducing new technology for parents to access student information, such as grade reports, attendance, and discipline reports, these principals involve parents and the community in the implementation of the new initiative. All communications from these principals are intentional, clear, consistent, and focused on results.

### **Monitoring: Check**

Accomplished principals consistently monitor the systems and processes against established goals and objectives, using all available resources and technologies. They design each monitoring effort to ensure equity and guarantee that all are justly served. These principals establish real-time and longitudinal data collection systems to monitor progress and trends to inform decisions. They develop processes and protocols for using the student data management system to monitor the instructional program effectively. They use the management structure to disaggregate data from all groups and determine further actions or interventions. For example, they may lead a gap analysis with teachers

to determine why a particular sub-population is achieving and another is not in relation to an established expectation. Accomplished principals analyze the results and use the findings about the root causes to develop a strategic plan and implement interventions.

When monitoring the performance of the organization, accomplished principals ask the following questions: “Are the depth, breadth, and definitions of the strategies sufficient to achieve the intended outcomes of high performance for all students? Are we on time, within budget, and on track for meeting or exceeding our established goals?” These principals continually monitor operational procedures to realize successful student performance. They use each step in the monitoring process to build greater ownership and commitment throughout the organization for the attainment of goals and objectives. After reviewing the process analytically and globally, these principals know whether or not to take action.

### **Continuous Improvement: Act**

Through a collaborative approach, accomplished principals make needed adjustments and communicate them effectively, keeping the systems on track and aligned to organizational objectives. To support continuous improvement, these principals regularly review, evaluate, and re-examine systems and processes, identifying obstacles and barriers, and minimizing or eliminating them. Such principals collaboratively prioritize actions to arrive at what is critical to achieving the goals. They regularly review and evaluate formal and informal processes, to support continuous improvement. As the organization changes, accomplished principals make certain that the systems and processes continue to add value to the organization.

Accomplished principals use appropriate data to make informed decisions. Through a collaborative leadership structure, these principals collect and analyze data to determine appropriate action. They assume personal responsibility and provide leadership to the process. These principals take appropriate and corrective action, report the results to the stakeholders, and identify the progress made. They use their findings to justify resource requests and broadly communicate the current state of the organization to the learning community.

## **Reflections on Standard VI**

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## Standard VII Advocacy

Accomplished principals effectively advocate internally and externally to advance the organization's vision and mission. These principals strategically seek, inform, and mobilize influential educational, political, and community leaders to advocate for all students and adults in the learning community.

Accomplished principals are driven by a deep desire to enrich the lives of those they serve by supporting the interests of the organization and its members. They passionately advocate—in multiple contexts for a variety of purposes—on behalf of students and adults in the learning community as well as in the education profession. In alignment with the organization's vision, mission, and goals, these principals identify and prioritize the key issues facing their students, the learning community, and the profession. To accomplish these goals, they engage in ongoing dialogue with representatives of diverse groups.

Accomplished principals recognize and reflect on major issues confronting society that may affect students and adults, solicit input from individuals within the organization as well as the larger community, and take action. They strategically seek, inform, and mobilize educational, political, and civic leaders to advocate for the best interests of the learning community. Accomplished principals courageously navigate the advocacy process to continuously promote the goals of the organization as well as education in the broader sense as an essential element of a thriving democracy.

Accomplished principals support the interests of the organization and its members by

- advocating for the organization and the individual
- advocating in the broader context

### **Advocating for the Organization and the Individual**

Accomplished principals systemically and strategically promote the well-being of the organization. They are effective communicators who relate to and reach all their constituencies and the larger community in ways that advance the organization's vision and mission. These principals lead advocacy efforts for programs and procedures that realize the vision, mission, and goals of the organization. When an initiative

prescribed by others does not serve the mission, they advocate for the learning community's best interest.

Accomplished principals apply their command of proven marketing theories and skills to foster a recognizable brand for the organization. These principals use data to highlight and promote the positive aspects of the organization. They provide contextual background information and propose options to move the organization forward. They handle communication about issues in a competent, confident, timely, and reassuring manner, using in-person, print, and digital means.

Accomplished principals are primary resources for information about teaching and learning. They are informed advocates for educational practices and tools that lead to successful and accomplished students. They use actual and virtual platforms for sharing education's successes and challenges and are accessible to educate others. In their roles as members of professional or civic organizations or as individual educational leaders, they advocate for the advancement of the profession. Accomplished principals care deeply for teachers and are stewards that advocate for the policies, tools, resources, and support essential for teachers to do their jobs well.

Accomplished principals advocate for the welfare and well-being of each student and adult. They use data to prioritize and address issues that directly affect students and their success in the learning community. For example, if there is a move to eliminate after-school care and it has been a proven program that supports both instruction and safety for students, these principals would advocate to keep the program. Accomplished principals ensure that staff have the tools and resources required to meet the organization's goals and objectives. These principals advocate for staff members so that they feel supported when someone challenges decisions the staff members have made in the best interest of students. For example, if a theatre director had good reason to select a play that elicits controversy, these principals will advocate for the theatre director's choice.

Accomplished principals effectively communicate with staff, students, and parents, providing comprehensive language to guide all advocacy-related interactions and interventions. These principals carefully use multiple measures and instruments to assess needs and prioritize advocacy efforts. For example, they may use the responses to written and digital parent and student survey questions, conversations with colleagues, and administrative dialogue and discussions to construct fair and equitable advocacy programs and procedures.

**Advocating in the Broader Context**

Accomplished principals realize that a variety of parental, social, community, religious, political, and educational audiences have an interest in and are affected by the learning community. These principals capitalize on the multitude of possible resources in these audiences that can make major contributions to achieving the organization’s goals.

Accomplished principals mentor both internal and external stakeholders so that they can convincingly adopt a position, garner support, and evoke action. These principals commit to a wide variety of advocacy efforts and charge internal stakeholders with building relationships, coalitions, and partnerships with external constituencies to enlist support and obtain resources. They provide internal stakeholders with talking points and marketing plans so that they can influence key external groups in a consistent voice. Accomplished principals use a wide range of print and electronic media and attend a wide variety of meetings and events to make issues visible in the community as well as to recognize the importance of those stakeholders.

Accomplished principals are visible ambassadors in the learning community and in the district, city, state, or nation. They deliberately form relationships with policy makers in these venues. These principals intentionally cultivate internal and external relationships—with colleagues, central office staff, and superintendents in the district, as well as with partners in the community and in important policy positions. They invite civic leaders to visit the learning community to learn about concerns and to celebrate successes.

Accomplished principals inspire members of the community to contribute to the achievement of educational goals. These principals create collaborative networks and serve as advocates for education in the larger community. They galvanize civic leaders who have the resources to support funding, the political power to support needed policies, and the voice to champion educational causes.

**Reflections on Standard VII**

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## Standard VIII Ethics

Accomplished principals are ethical. They consistently demonstrate a high degree of personal and professional ethics exemplified by integrity, justice, and equity. These principals establish a culture in which exemplary ethical behavior is practiced by all stakeholders.

Accomplished principals are ethical leaders who possess and demonstrate core values of integrity, honesty, and fairness. They subscribe to, model, and hold themselves and all students and adults in the learning community accountable to a high level of personal and professional ethics. These principals have the courage to lead appropriate and honest communication with all stakeholders. In making informed and just decisions, these principals demonstrate firmness and flexibility, while upholding high standards of accountability to teaching and learning.

Accomplished principals systematically nurture the development of student character and adult professionalism. These principals understand the competing values, cultural norms, and beliefs of the learning community. They realize that these values and norms may, at times, create discord, and they exercise political acumen from an ethical lens to achieve effective resolution. While these principals adhere to existing policies and regulations, they also advocate for additional policies to promote and provide an ethical and safe environment for students and adults. These principals establish procedures to execute the policies. Accomplished principals are committed to creating a collaborative learning community, and they communicate high expectations for civic responsibility and commitment to the common good.

Accomplished principals promote a fair and just organization by

- demonstrating personal and professional ethics
- establishing an ethical culture

### Demonstrating Personal and Professional Ethics

Accomplished principals know that effective leadership emanates from their competence and their consistent, ethical behavior—not from their title alone. By modeling personal and professional ethics, accomplished principals establish trusting relationships with all stakeholders as they adhere to and advocate for the creation of policies, procedures,

laws, and contracts. Personally and professionally, these principals operate legally, consistently, and fairly in their words and actions.

Accomplished principals understand the role and power of perception as it applies to ethical judgment. They are committed to the integrity of the decision-making process. These principals make decisions honestly and transparently and communicate them skillfully. For example, they hire the person who best meets the needs of the position, regardless of internal and external pressures. Accomplished principals are unwavering in their decisions and adept at reconciling common sense with policy.

While believing in accountability for all, accomplished principals exercise compassion when difficult circumstances warrant support and encouragement. They respect and honor diversity, and question assumptions as they acknowledge and remove personal bias from their actions. Accomplished principals exercise confidentiality with discretion, while encouraging others to do the same. They reflect on difficult situations and, when faced with ethical challenges, use knowledge gained from past experiences to make wise, informed decisions.

### **Establishing an Ethical Culture**

Accomplished principals work with staff, students, and parents to establish a framework of ethical norms, beliefs, and values to govern behavior inside and outside the learning community. They influence other members of the learning community to be good citizens and contribute in a positive manner to the broader community. These principals are the catalyst, igniting a culture in which students and adults act on their responsibility to be good citizens and address inequities. For example, these principals model and create conditions in which students and adults act altruistically to support those with limited resources in the learning community.

By creating agreed-upon norms and shared expectations, accomplished principals establish the conditions for an ethical culture to be self-sustaining—one that does not rely on the principal's presence. These principals clearly communicate ethical expectations and ensure those expectations are aligned with the vision and mission of the learning community.

Accomplished principals provide for equitable opportunities and results throughout the learning community. These principals always examine the intended and unintended consequences of policies and practices in terms of their effects on students. For example, they may establish open access to all classes for any student who expresses an interest.

Accomplished principals are conscientious about the ethical reporting and use of data. These principals immediately address ethical challenges, particularly those that detract from teaching and learning, in a professional manner. They resolve conflicts in a way that communicates strong ethics while maintaining respect for all individuals.



## Standard IX Reflection and Growth

Accomplished principals are humble lead learners who make their practice public and view their own learning as a foundational part of the work of school leadership. They are reflective practitioners who build on their strengths and identify areas for personal and professional growth. They adapt their paradigm and practice to result in improved student performance and enhanced teacher instruction through reflective practices.

Accomplished principals are above all, lead learners. They are intentional about their own learning and engage publicly in refining their practice and learning from mistakes. They are highly reflective individuals who engage in continuous personal and professional growth. These principals honestly and continually assess their strengths and weaknesses while seeking opportunities to improve. Based on the results of this regular assessment, they establish learning goals for themselves and develop a personal plan to attain their professional aspirations. These principals combine new learning with their professional experience and relevant data to improve their leadership, positively affecting adult practice and student learning. Accomplished principals step out of their comfort zones and take strategic risks. They seek new, different, and challenging experiences that enhance their individual and organizational capacity.

Accomplished principals encourage self-reflection and self-renewal for themselves and others in the learning community through

- humility and continuous personal learning
- personal reflection
- reflective strategies
- a culture of reflection
- rejuvenation and recommitment

### Humility and Continuous Personal Learning

Accomplished principals view their own learning as an intentional, central, foundational aspect of the work of school leadership, integrally linked to the growth of the school. They are risk-takers who make their own learning journey public, placing their practice—and

the continuous revision of their practice—in view of teachers, staff, parents and students as a model of commitment to perpetual learning. They are modest and unpretentious rather than all-knowing. Accomplished principals learn side by side with teachers and students in service of school goals and student success.

### **Personal Reflection**

Accomplished principals value self-knowledge and self-understanding. Through personal reflection, they examine their practice through the lens of equity, fairness, and justice. They use this process to determine whether there is a connection between their biases and their behaviors, and modify their behavior to safeguard against their biases.

Accomplished principals are lifelong learners who build on their strengths and identify areas for growth. They assemble a network of support and guidance by enlisting mentors, colleagues, critical friends, and other leaders from inside and outside the field of education. Through involvement in leadership and professional growth opportunities, these principals incorporate new learning into practice. They use the resources of local, state, and national professional organizations to enhance their skills.

Accomplished principals build a diverse leadership team with complementary strengths to balance their leadership. For example, in leading an organization, a principal whose strengths are conceptual would enlist and involve someone who is more detail oriented.

### **Reflective Strategies**

From their investment in reflective practice, accomplished principals accrue benefits not only for themselves but also for the learning community. To improve their professional practice, they willingly invite, accept, and use feedback from others. These principals create systems that seek, value, and use formal and informal feedback from all who are affected by their leadership. For example, such principals may use a 360-degree evaluation approach to determine how others perceive them and then use the results to improve their practice. Accomplished principals also gather and consider data on the current condition of the organization. They equitably consider and respond to this information, linking the effectiveness of their leadership practice with the performance of the organization and making adjustments needed for their own growth and for the advancement of the learning community.

Accomplished principals are relentless in taking advantage of opportunities to reflect and to increase their professional knowledge. These principals remain current on educational research that supports their leadership; they see the interrelatedness of research in all fields to education. For example, they would read extensively on creating and cultivating a vision and mission before and while collaborating with staff in the creation of the vision and mission for the learning community.

Accomplished principals use technology as a powerful learning tool. They may participate in digital networks for communication among professional colleagues, use social networking tools for informal learning, or take part with professional colleagues in online learning communities. These principals use such learning opportunities to consistently reflect on ways to improve their practice of leadership.

Accomplished principals engage in action research as a reflective exercise. For example, in response to staff needs, they may develop a demonstration classroom to test learning strategies for themselves before providing professional learning opportunities for their teachers.

Accomplished principals reflect on current research about student learning and effective teaching practice. They make connections with what is happening in other professional fields as it relates to instructional practice. These principals adapt their leadership as they reflect on the implications embodied in the research. They know that research is useful only when theory is bridged with practice based on a particular context. They use new research to enhance, without derailing, the organization and instructional practices.

### **A Culture of Reflection**

Accomplished principals know that constructive reflection is key to continual improvement of the culture within the learning community. They collaborate with their colleagues, network, study research, and seek experiences to enhance their practice, expand their repertoire, and deepen their knowledge. They develop the ability of staff and teachers to reflect in the moment, in the midst of action, and then to conduct deeper reflection. These principals provide regular opportunities to teachers for self and group reflection to continuously improve teaching practices. For example, they may establish professional learning communities to provide a structure for collegial reflection.

Accomplished principals establish continued growth and reflection as a priority in the learning community. For example, they may see to it that teachers have a growth plan and review it continually throughout the year to inform their practice; cadres of teachers and staff may then discuss shared areas of strengths and weaknesses. These principals model and lead constructive, non-defensive listening and response to critique, so that this essential aspect of reflection is built into the culture of the organization.

### **Rejuvenation and Recommitment**

Because accomplished principals, like most accomplished education professionals, realize the necessity of balancing their personal and professional lives, they intentionally create opportunities to celebrate their journey of growth. For example, they set aside time for family, friends, and recreation. These principals understand the value of rejuvenation and engage in activities that allow them to renew themselves, so that they can be fully present in their work.



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Building on one of NBPTS' core values that every child deserves an accomplished teacher, Joseph A. Aguerrebere, President and Chief Executive Officer of NBPTS, recognized that every teacher deserves accomplished school leadership. Acting on the urgent need for effective schools where every child is an engaged and successful learner, where every teacher is accomplished, and where every parent is engaged and empowered, he is leading the National Board toward enacting the third part of the National Board mission:

*To advance the quality of teaching and learning by*

- Advocating related education reforms to integrate National Board Certification in American education and to capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers.

A heartfelt thanks to Dr. Aguerrebere; these standards are a direct result of your vision and leadership.

The National Board *Accomplished Principal Standards*, First Edition, were developed by exceptional educational leaders, with educational leaders and for educational leaders. When these twenty-one carefully selected individuals with differing experiences and viewpoints gathered, the discourse was rich, diverse, and dynamic. Add to the mix an innovative process for identifying, refining, and gaining consensus on the standards through multiple five-day working sessions, and a professional learning community was created and sustained. During the large group sessions, each of you actively listened to each other, valuing and honoring each voice until you established shared interpretations of the complex role of accomplished principals. I offer my heartfelt appreciation to you individually and collectively for your insight, energy, and commitment to the process and the challenge. The results of this detailed process and the imprint of your diversity are evident in the final standards. I wish to thank three individuals who ably stepped up to lead dynamic teams throughout the process. Sheila Evans, Kathy O'Neill, and James Pughsley provided calm and steady leadership, assisting their team members as individuals to understand each others' ideas, and driving the rich discussion to strong, cogent prose. With a purposeful sense of urgency, you advanced the *Accomplished Principal Standards*.

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To each of you, please accept our deep appreciation for your outstanding contributions to the *Accomplished Principal Standards* and for establishing the complex, critical role of the principal.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joan Aughter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J" and "A".

**Joan Aughter**

Chief Program Officer

# National Board Standards for **Accomplished** **Principals**



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Professional Teaching Standards



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Professional Teaching Standards

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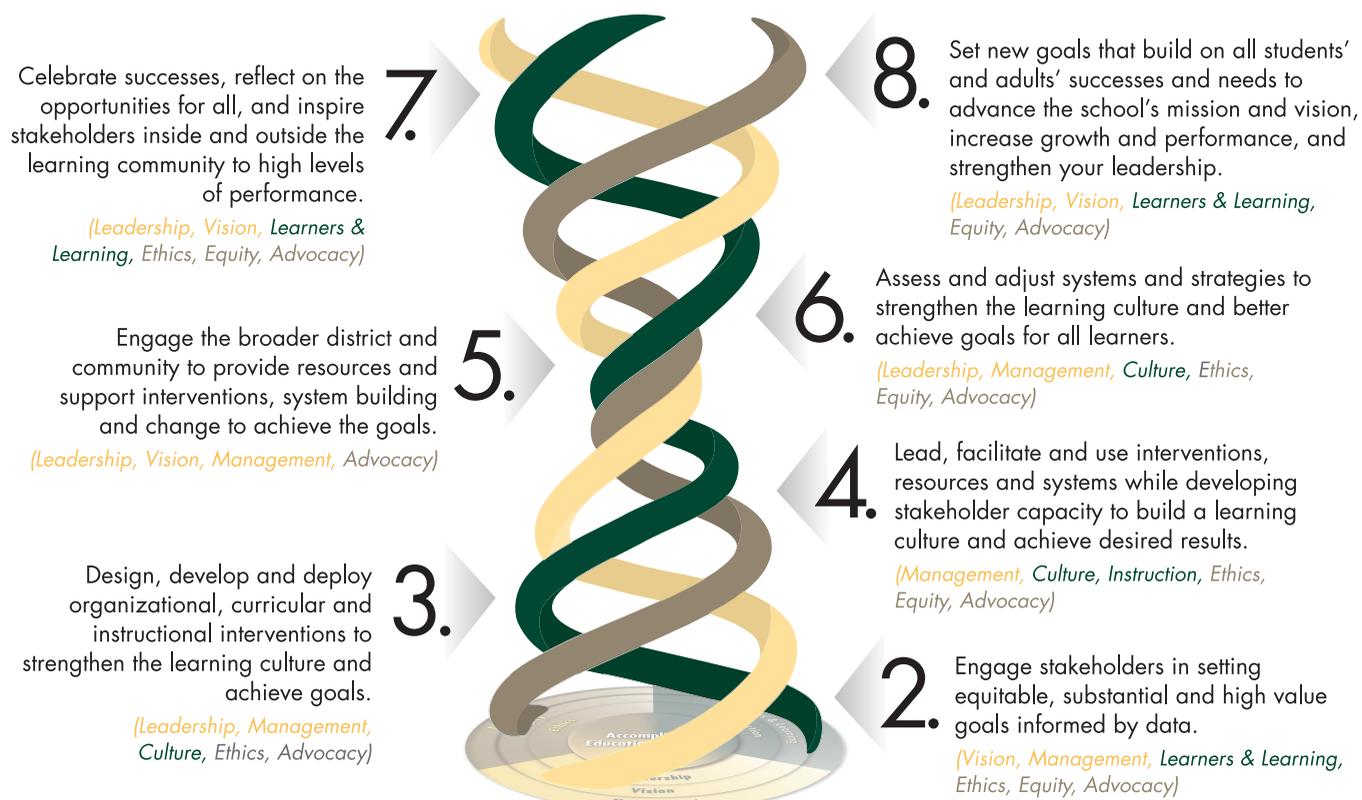
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## The Architecture of Accomplished Educational Leading

The Architecture of Accomplished Educational Leading triple helix illustrates the upwardly spiraling process reflective of an accomplished educational leader's practice. The three strands portray the skills, applications and dispositions as defined in the core propositions and applied through eight stages in an integrated process.



### 1. Your Learning Community & Your Leadership

What is the vision/mission?  
What are the goals for the learning community?  
What is the context of your learning community?  
Who are your stakeholders?  
Where are your stakeholders in relation to the visions/mission?  
What do they need or you need from them?

What are your leadership strengths?  
How can you effectively lead your learning community?  
How can you and your learning community achieve desired results?  
*(Leadership, Vision, Management, Culture, Learners & Learning, Ethics, Equity, Advocacy)*

# Professional Standards for Educational Leaders

National Policy Board for Educational Administration

# 2015

October 2015

formerly known as ISLLC Standards

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# Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015

## National Policy Board for Educational Administration

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National School Boards Association (NSBA)

University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA)

October 2015

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## Introduction

It's the end of another Thursday, and in schools around the country, educational leaders are shutting down their computers and heading home after another full-throttle day. As they leave the building, they replay the events of the day and ask themselves: *Did I help make a difference today for our students? Did I focus on what matters most for their learning and well being?*

The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 provide guideposts so that the answers to these critical questions are a resounding “Yes!” Grounded in current research and the real-life experiences of educational leaders, they articulate the leadership that our schools need and our students deserve. They are student-centric, outlining foundational principles of leadership to guide the practice of educational leaders so they can move the needle on student learning and achieve more equitable outcomes. They're designed to ensure that educational leaders are ready to meet effectively the challenges and opportunities of the job today and in the future as education, schools and society continue to transform.

### WHY DO EDUCATIONAL LEADERS NEED NEW STANDARDS NOW?

There are several reasons. The Council of Chief State School Officers published the first standards for educational leaders in 1996, followed by a modest update in 2008 based on the empirical research at the time. Both versions provided frameworks for policy on education leadership in 45 states and the District of Columbia. But the world in which schools operate today is very different from the one of just a few years ago—and all signs point to more change ahead. The global economy is transforming jobs and the 21st century workplace for which schools prepare students. Technologies are advancing faster than ever. The conditions and characteristics of children, in terms of demographics, family structures and more, are changing. On the education front, the politics and shifts of control make the headlines daily. Cuts in school funding loom everywhere, even as schools are being subjected to increasingly competitive market pressures and held to higher levels of accountability for student achievement.

Without question, such changes are creating myriad challenges for educational leaders. At the same time they present rich and exciting opportunities for educational leaders to innovate and inspire staff to pursue new, creative approaches for improving schools and promoting student learning. The profession of educational leadership has developed significantly. Educators have a better understanding of how and in what ways effective leadership contributes to student achievement. An expanding base of knowledge from research and practice shows that educational leaders exert influence on student achievement by creating challenging but also caring and supportive conditions conducive to each student's learning. They relentlessly develop and support teachers, create positive working conditions, effectively allocate resources, construct appropriate organizational policies and systems, and engage in other deep and meaningful work outside of the classroom that has a powerful impact on what happens inside it. Given this growing knowledge—and the changing demands of the job—educational leaders need new standards to guide their practice in directions that will be the most productive and beneficial to students.

## HOW WERE THE 2015 STANDARDS DEVELOPED?

The 2015 Standards are the result of an extensive process that took an in-depth look at the new education leadership landscape. It involved a thorough review of empirical research (see the Bibliography for a selection of supporting sources) and sought the input of researchers and more than 1,000 school and district leaders through surveys and focus groups to identify gaps among the 2008 Standards, the day-to-day work of education leaders, and leadership demands of the future. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), and American Association of School Administrators (AASA) were instrumental to this work. The public was also invited to comment on two drafts of the Standards, which contributed to the final product. The National Policy Board for Education Administration (NPBEA), a consortium of professional organizations committed to advancing school leadership (including those named above), has assumed leadership of the 2015 Standards in recognition of their significance to the profession and will be their steward going forward.

## WHAT MAKES THEM PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS?

Professional standards define the nature and the quality of work of persons who practice that profession, in this case educational leaders. They are created for and by the profession to guide professional practice and how practitioners are prepared, hired, developed, supervised and evaluated. They inform government policies and regulations that oversee the profession. By articulating the scope of work and the values that the profession stands for, standards suggest how practitioners can achieve the outcomes that the profession demands and the public expects. Professional standards are not static. They are regularly reviewed and adjusted to accurately reflect evolving understandings of, expectations for, and contexts that shape the profession's work.

## TO WHOM DO THE 2015 STANDARDS APPLY?

The Standards are foundational to all levels of educational leadership. They apply to principals and assistant principals and they apply to district leaders as they engage in similar domains of work as school leaders. However, the specific leadership activities that follow each Standard are cast more toward school-level leadership than district-level leadership. Moreover, district-level leaders have additional responsibilities associated with their particular roles (e.g., working with school boards and labor relations), and those responsibilities extend beyond these Standards. Such additional responsibilities are described in other standards focusing specifically on district-level leadership.

## WHAT'S NEW ABOUT THE 2015 STANDARDS?

The 2015 Standards have been recast with a stronger, clearer emphasis on students and student learning, outlining foundational principles of leadership to help ensure that each child is well-educated and prepared for the 21st century. They elevate areas of educational leader work that were once not well understood or deemed less relevant but have since been shown to contribute to student learning. It is not enough to have the right curriculum and teachers

teaching it, although both are crucial. For learning to happen, educational leaders must pursue all realms of their work with an unwavering attention to students. They must approach every teacher evaluation, every interaction with the central office, every analysis of data with one question always in mind: How will this help our students excel as learners?

The Standards recognize the central importance of human relationships not only in leadership work but in teaching and student learning. They stress the importance of both academic rigor and press as well as the support and care required for students to excel. The Standards reflect a positive approach to leadership that is optimistic, emphasizes development and strengths, and focuses on human potential.

The 2015 Standards adopt a future-oriented perspective. While they are grounded in the present, they are aspirational, recognizing that the changing world in which educational leaders work today will continue to transform—and the demands and expectations for educational leaders along with it. The 2015 Standards envision those future challenges and opportunities so educational leaders can succeed in the future.

The 2015 Standards are aspirational in other ways, too. They challenge the profession, professional associations, policy makers, institutions of higher education, and other organizations that support educational leaders and their development to move beyond established practices and systems and to strive for a better future. The 2015 Standards focus on accomplished leadership practice to inspire educational leaders to stretch themselves and reach a level of excellence in their practice, no matter where they are in their careers. They are relevant at all career stages, although application will vary and is an area that the field should explore further.

## **WHAT IS THE LINK BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND STUDENT LEARNING?**

The 2015 Standards embody a research- and practice-based understanding of the relationship between educational leadership and student learning. Improving student learning takes a holistic view of leadership. In all realms of their work, educational leaders must focus on how they are promoting the learning, achievement, development, and well-being of each student. The 2015 Standards reflect interdependent domains, qualities and values of leadership work that research and practice suggest are integral to student success:

1. Mission, Vision, and Core Values
2. Ethics and Professional Norms
3. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness
4. Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
5. Community of Care and Support for Students
6. Professional Capacity of School Personnel
7. Professional Community for Teachers and Staff
8. Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community
9. Operations and Management
10. School Improvement

In practice, these domains do not function independently but as an interdependent system that propels each student to academic and personal success. They, and the Standards that represent them, can be understood in three related clusters. The first cluster is Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, and Community of Care and Support for Students. The second cluster is Professional Capacity of School Personnel, Professional Community for Teachers and Staff, Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community, and Operations and Management. The third cluster is Mission, Vision and Core Values, Ethics and Professional Norms, and Equity and Cultural Responsiveness. The domain of School Improvement affects all of the clusters, which together reflect a theory of how educational leader practice influences student achievement.

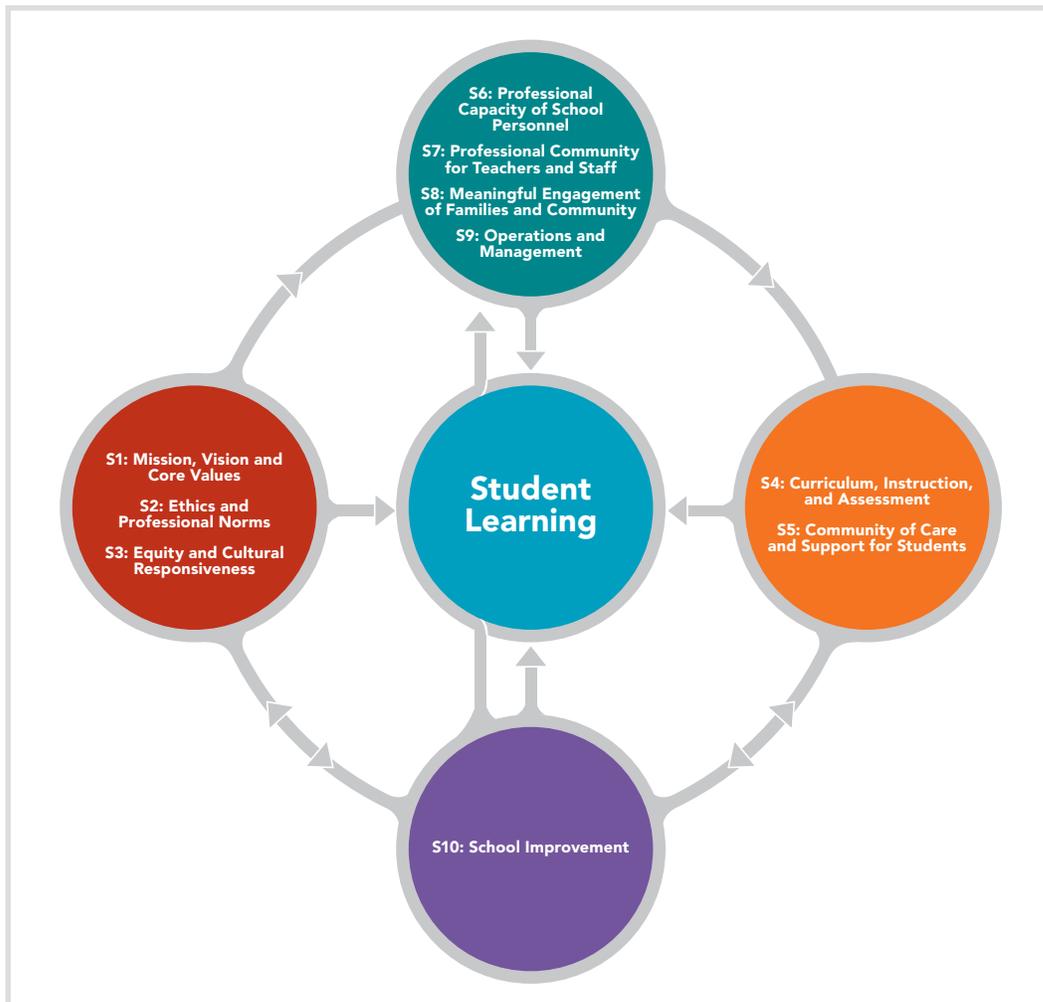
As shown in Figure 1 on page 5, at the core, students learn when educational leaders foster safe, caring and supportive school learning communities and promote rigorous curricula, instructional and assessment systems. This work requires educational leaders to build and strengthen a network of organizational supports—the professional capacity of teachers and staff, the professional community in which they learn and work, family and community engagement, and effective, efficient management and operations of the school. In all of their work, educational leaders are driven by the school’s mission, vision, and core values. They are called to act ethically and with professional integrity. And they promote equity and cultural responsiveness. Finally, educationally effective leaders believe their school can always be better. To realize their schools’ visions of student learning and stay true to their schools’ core values, educational leaders subject every realm of the school to improvement, including themselves and their own work. They are tenacious change agents who are creative, inspirational and willing to weather the potential risks, uncertainties and political fall-out to make their schools places where each student thrives. Figure 1 illustrates how the 2015 Standards fit into this theory, showing each by its number (e.g. S1, S2).

While the primary focus of the 2015 Standards is on leaders in administrative roles, the Standards recognize that effective school leadership is not the sole province of those in such roles. Leadership work for effective schools can be performed by many within a school, in particular by teachers. Administrative leaders play a crucial role in the effective development and exercise of leadership school wide. Therefore, the 2015 Standards reflect the importance of cultivating leadership capacity of others.

### **HOW CAN THE 2015 STANDARDS BE USED?**

The 2015 Standards are “model” professional standards in that they communicate expectations to practitioners, supporting institutions, professional associations, policy makers and the public about the work, qualities and values of effective educational leaders. They are a compass that guides the direction of practice directly as well as indirectly through the work of policy makers, professional associations and supporting institutions. They do not prescribe specific actions, encouraging those involved in educational leadership and its development to adapt their application to be most effective in particular circumstances and contexts.

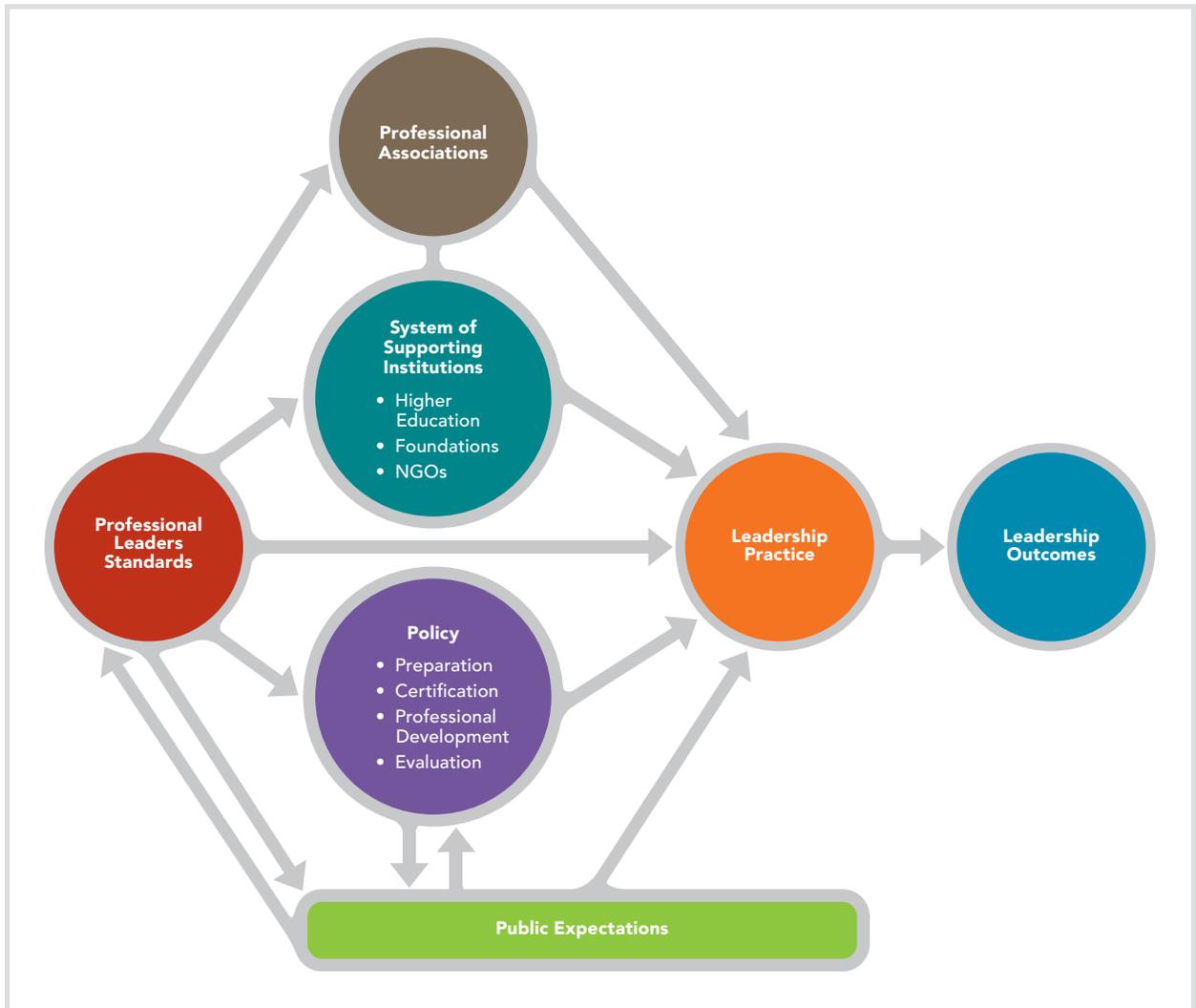
Figure 2 presents a “theory-of-action” of the ways that professional standards can guide educational leadership practice and promote its outcomes. This theory-of-action also indicates how



**Figure 1: Relationship of School Leadership Work to Student Learning**

these professional standards can be effectively used. Standards have direct influence on members of the profession by creating expectations and setting directions for the practice of educational leaders. They have indirect influence on educational leadership by helping to shape the actions and support provided to members of the profession by professional associations and the system of supporting institutions involved in educational leader preparation and development. They also have indirect influence on educational leadership by serving as a foundation for policy and regulations regarding the profession and its practice, including those related to educational leader preparation, certification, professional development, and evaluation. Moreover, standards shape public expectations for the profession, for policy, and for supporting institutions which also affect practice.

More specifically, the 2015 Standards can be a guiding force to states and leadership preparation programs as they identify and develop the specific knowledge, skills, dispositions, and other characteristics required of educational leaders to achieve real student success in school. With consideration of variations necessitated by local contexts, states can use the Standards to ensure that policies and programs set consistent



**Figure 2: Theory-of-Action of the Role of Professional Standards in Leadership Practice and Outcomes**

expectations for educational leaders over the course of their careers, from initial preparation, recruitment and hiring, to induction and mentoring, to evaluation and career-long professional learning. The Standards can guide the operationalization of practice and outcomes for leadership development and evaluation.

The high turnover rate of educational leaders nationwide points to the complexities, responsibilities, and relentless pressures of the job, and such turnover derails improvement efforts necessary for student learning. Whether they are first-year novices or veterans of the profession, educational leaders need ongoing support to succeed in a job that is dramatically changing. The nature and qualities of work articulated in the 2015 Standards serve as a foundation for high-quality professional development opportunities so that educational leaders can continually develop and refine their abilities to excel at their work.

As foundational principles of leadership, the 2015 Standards can also inform the work of central office administrative leaders and school boards. They communicate what is important about leadership both at the school and district levels. They serve as a guide for central office leaders to develop systems of development, support, and accountability for school-level leadership, ensuring that the central office functions to serve the needs of schools in ways that are beneficial to students.

Finally, the 2015 Standards are an anchor document upon which related products can be developed. They helped to shape the National Educational Leadership Preparation Standards (NELP), formerly the Educational Leadership Constituent Council Standards (ELCC), and the Accreditation Review Process. These guide the preparation of aspiring educational leaders and the process by which preparation programs seek accreditation from the Council for the Accreditation for Educational Preparation (CAEP). The Standards are also the foundation for the Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards 2015.

The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 should not be a static document. As professional standards they should be regularly reviewed and revised to accurately reflect evolving understandings of and expectations for the profession's work. Their adoption and implementation should be monitored and their influence on the profession and the practice of educational leadership should be evaluated. There are particular issues of implementation that deserve examination, among them the effective application of the Standards across levels of schooling, educational locales and contexts, and career phrases. Knowledge from such inquiry will be instrumental to keep the Standards meaningful and alive.

Schools and school districts need effective leaders like never before to take on the challenges and opportunities facing education today and in the future. The 2015 Standards paint a rich portrait of such a leader, one whom our students are counting on to help them reach their full potential. They shouldn't have to wait any longer.

\*\*\*

## Organization of the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015

The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 are organized around the domains, qualities, and values of leadership work that research and practice indicate contribute to students' academic success and well-being. Each Standard features a title and a statement that succinctly defines the work of effective educational leaders in that particular realm. A series of elements follow, which elaborate the work that is necessary to meet the Standard. The number of elements for each Standard varies in order to describe salient dimensions of the work involved. It does not imply relative importance of a particular Standard.

# Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015

## STANDARD 1. MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES

**Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.**

*Effective leaders:*

- a) Develop an educational mission for the school to promote the academic success and well-being of each student.
- b) In collaboration with members of the school and the community and using relevant data, develop and promote a vision for the school on the successful learning and development of each child and on instructional and organizational practices that promote such success.
- c) Articulate, advocate, and cultivate core values that define the school's culture and stress the imperative of child-centered education; high expectations and student support; equity, inclusiveness, and social justice; openness, caring, and trust; and continuous improvement.
- d) Strategically develop, implement, and evaluate actions to achieve the vision for the school.
- e) Review the school's mission and vision and adjust them to changing expectations and opportunities for the school, and changing needs and situations of students.
- f) Develop shared understanding of and commitment to mission, vision, and core values within the school and the community.
- g) Model and pursue the school's mission, vision, and core values in all aspects of leadership.

## STANDARD 2. ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL NORMS

**Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote *each* student’s academic success and well-being.**

*Effective leaders:*

- a) Act ethically and professionally in personal conduct, relationships with others, decision-making, stewardship of the school’s resources, and all aspects of school leadership.
- b) Act according to and promote the professional norms of integrity, fairness, transparency, trust, collaboration, perseverance, learning, and continuous improvement.
- c) Place children at the center of education and accept responsibility for each student’s academic success and well-being.
- d) Safeguard and promote the values of democracy, individual freedom and responsibility, equity, social justice, community, and diversity.
- e) Lead with interpersonal and communication skill, social-emotional insight, and understanding of all students’ and staff members’ backgrounds and cultures.
- f) Provide moral direction for the school and promote ethical and professional behavior among faculty and staff.

## STANDARD 3. EQUITY AND CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

**Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote *each* student’s academic success and well-being.**

*Effective leaders:*

- a) Ensure that each student is treated fairly, respectfully, and with an understanding of each student’s culture and context.
- b) Recognize, respect, and employ each student’s strengths, diversity, and culture as assets for teaching and learning.
- c) Ensure that each student has equitable access to effective teachers, learning opportunities, academic and social support, and other resources necessary for success.
- d) Develop student policies and address student misconduct in a positive, fair, and unbiased manner.
- e) Confront and alter institutional biases of student marginalization, deficit-based schooling, and low expectations associated with race, class, culture and language, gender and sexual orientation, and disability or special status.
- f) Promote the preparation of students to live productively in and contribute to the diverse cultural contexts of a global society.
- g) Act with cultural competence and responsiveness in their interactions, decision making, and practice.
- h) Address matters of equity and cultural responsiveness in all aspects of leadership.

## STANDARD 4. CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT

**Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being.**

*Effective leaders:*

- a) Implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that promote the mission, vision, and core values of the school, embody high expectations for student learning, align with academic standards, and are culturally responsive.
- b) Align and focus systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment within and across grade levels to promote student academic success, love of learning, the identities and habits of learners, and healthy sense of self.
- c) Promote instructional practice that is consistent with knowledge of child learning and development, effective pedagogy, and the needs of each student.
- d) Ensure instructional practice that is intellectually challenging, authentic to student experiences, recognizes student strengths, and is differentiated and personalized.
- e) Promote the effective use of technology in the service of teaching and learning.
- f) Employ valid assessments that are consistent with knowledge of child learning and development and technical standards of measurement.
- g) Use assessment data appropriately and within technical limitations to monitor student progress and improve instruction.

## STANDARD 5. COMMUNITY OF CARE AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

**Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.**

*Effective leaders:*

- a) Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy school environment that meets that the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student.
- b) Create and sustain a school environment in which each student is known, accepted and valued, trusted and respected, cared for, and encouraged to be an active and responsible member of the school community.
- c) Provide coherent systems of academic and social supports, services, extracurricular activities, and accommodations to meet the range of learning needs of each student.
- d) Promote adult-student, student-peer, and school-community relationships that value and support academic learning and positive social and emotional development.
- e) Cultivate and reinforce student engagement in school and positive student conduct.
- f) Infuse the school's learning environment with the cultures and languages of the school's community.

## STANDARD 6. PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL

**Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being.**

*Effective leaders:*

- a) Recruit, hire, support, develop, and retain effective and caring teachers and other professional staff and form them into an educationally effective faculty.
- b) Plan for and manage staff turnover and succession, providing opportunities for effective induction and mentoring of new personnel.
- c) Develop teachers' and staff members' professional knowledge, skills, and practice through differentiated opportunities for learning and growth, guided by understanding of professional and adult learning and development.
- d) Foster continuous improvement of individual and collective instructional capacity to achieve outcomes envisioned for each student.
- e) Deliver actionable feedback about instruction and other professional practice through valid, research-anchored systems of supervision and evaluation to support the development of teachers' and staff members' knowledge, skills, and practice.
- f) Empower and motivate teachers and staff to the highest levels of professional practice and to continuous learning and improvement.
- g) Develop the capacity, opportunities, and support for teacher leadership and leadership from other members of the school community.
- h) Promote the personal and professional health, well-being, and work-life balance of faculty and staff.
- i) Tend to their own learning and effectiveness through reflection, study, and improvement, maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

## STANDARD 7. PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY FOR TEACHERS AND STAFF

**Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote *each* student’s academic success and well-being.**

*Effective leaders:*

- a) Develop workplace conditions for teachers and other professional staff that promote effective professional development, practice, and student learning.
- b) Empower and entrust teachers and staff with collective responsibility for meeting the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student, pursuant to the mission, vision, and core values of the school.
- c) Establish and sustain a professional culture of engagement and commitment to shared vision, goals, and objectives pertaining to the education of the whole child; high expectations for professional work; ethical and equitable practice; trust and open communication; collaboration, collective efficacy, and continuous individual and organizational learning and improvement.
- d) Promote mutual accountability among teachers and other professional staff for each student’s success and the effectiveness of the school as a whole.
- e) Develop and support open, productive, caring, and trusting working relationships among leaders, faculty, and staff to promote professional capacity and the improvement of practice.
- f) Design and implement job-embedded and other opportunities for professional learning collaboratively with faculty and staff.
- g) Provide opportunities for collaborative examination of practice, collegial feedback, and collective learning.
- h) Encourage faculty-initiated improvement of programs and practices.

## STANDARD 8. MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT OF FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY

**Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being.**

*Effective leaders:*

- a) Are approachable, accessible, and welcoming to families and members of the community.
- b) Create and sustain positive, collaborative, and productive relationships with families and the community for the benefit of students.
- c) Engage in regular and open two-way communication with families and the community about the school, students, needs, problems, and accomplishments.
- d) Maintain a presence in the community to understand its strengths and needs, develop productive relationships, and engage its resources for the school.
- e) Create means for the school community to partner with families to support student learning in and out of school.
- f) Understand, value, and employ the community's cultural, social, intellectual, and political resources to promote student learning and school improvement.
- g) Develop and provide the school as a resource for families and the community.
- h) Advocate for the school and district, and for the importance of education and student needs and priorities to families and the community.
- i) Advocate publicly for the needs and priorities of students, families, and the community.
- j) Build and sustain productive partnerships with public and private sectors to promote school improvement and student learning.

## STANDARD 9. OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

**Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being.**

*Effective leaders:*

- a) Institute, manage, and monitor operations and administrative systems that promote the mission and vision of the school.
- b) Strategically manage staff resources, assigning and scheduling teachers and staff to roles and responsibilities that optimize their professional capacity to address each student's learning needs.
- c) Seek, acquire, and manage fiscal, physical, and other resources to support curriculum, instruction, and assessment; student learning community; professional capacity and community; and family and community engagement.
- d) Are responsible, ethical, and accountable stewards of the school's monetary and non-monetary resources, engaging in effective budgeting and accounting practices.
- e) Protect teachers' and other staff members' work and learning from disruption.
- f) Employ technology to improve the quality and efficiency of operations and management.
- g) Develop and maintain data and communication systems to deliver actionable information for classroom and school improvement.
- h) Know, comply with, and help the school community understand local, state, and federal laws, rights, policies, and regulations so as to promote student success.
- i) Develop and manage relationships with feeder and connecting schools for enrollment management and curricular and instructional articulation.
- j) Develop and manage productive relationships with the central office and school board.
- k) Develop and administer systems for fair and equitable management of conflict among students, faculty and staff, leaders, families, and community.
- l) Manage governance processes and internal and external politics toward achieving the school's mission and vision.

## STANDARD 10. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

**Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being.**

*Effective leaders:*

- a) Seek to make school more effective for each student, teachers and staff, families, and the community.
- b) Use methods of continuous improvement to achieve the vision, fulfill the mission, and promote the core values of the school.
- c) Prepare the school and the community for improvement, promoting readiness, an imperative for improvement, instilling mutual commitment and accountability, and developing the knowledge, skills, and motivation to succeed in improvement.
- d) Engage others in an ongoing process of evidence-based inquiry, learning, strategic goal setting, planning, implementation, and evaluation for continuous school and classroom improvement.
- e) Employ situationally-appropriate strategies for improvement, including transformational and incremental, adaptive approaches and attention to different phases of implementation.
- f) Assess and develop the capacity of staff to assess the value and applicability of emerging educational trends and the findings of research for the school and its improvement.
- g) Develop technically appropriate systems of data collection, management, analysis, and use, connecting as needed to the district office and external partners for support in planning, implementation, monitoring, feedback, and evaluation.
- h) Adopt a systems perspective and promote coherence among improvement efforts and all aspects of school organization, programs, and services.
- i) Manage uncertainty, risk, competing initiatives, and politics of change with courage and perseverance, providing support and encouragement, and openly communicating the need for, process for, and outcomes of improvement efforts.
- j) Develop and promote leadership among teachers and staff for inquiry, experimentation and innovation, and initiating and implementing improvement.

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### **Standards Update Project Committee**

The Standards Update Project Committee reviewed research on educational leadership, combined that review with findings of the Field Knowledge Committee, and drafted revisions to the 2008 ISLLC Standards.

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The Tools Project Committee researched and inventoried the available tools for supporting the implementation of leadership standards and suggested additional tools to disseminate information about leadership standards and how to implement them.

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### **Council of Chief State School Officers**

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a non-partisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who lead departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress and the public. From 2013-2015, CCSSO convened the various committees and working group that produced the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015.

[www.ccsso.org](http://www.ccsso.org)



### **National Policy Board for Educational Administration**

The following organizations and councils are members of the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA): American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, American Association of School Administrators, Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, Council of Chief State School Officers, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of Secondary School Principals, National of Professors of Educational Administration, National School Boards Association, and University Council for Educational Administration. NPBEA approves the professional standards that guide the continuous improvement of the practice of educational leaders.

[www.npbea.org](http://www.npbea.org)



### **The Wallace Foundation**

The Wallace Foundation supported the development of Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (*formerly known as ISLLC 2008*) as part of its long-term commitment to develop and share knowledge, ideas and insights aimed at increasing understanding of how education leadership can contribute to improved student learning. Many of the resources that informed this publication and other materials on education leadership can be downloaded for free at

[www.wallacefoundation.org](http://www.wallacefoundation.org)

# Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015

## **STANDARD 1. MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES**

Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of *each* student.

## **STANDARD 2. ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL NORMS**

Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.

## **STANDARD 3. EQUITY AND CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS**

Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.

## **STANDARD 4. CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT**

Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.

## **STANDARD 5. COMMUNITY OF CARE AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS**

Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of *each* student.

## **STANDARD 6. PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.

## **STANDARD 7. PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY FOR TEACHERS AND STAFF**

Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.

## **STANDARD 8. MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT OF FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY**

Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.

## **STANDARD 9. OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT**

Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.

## **STANDARD 10. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.

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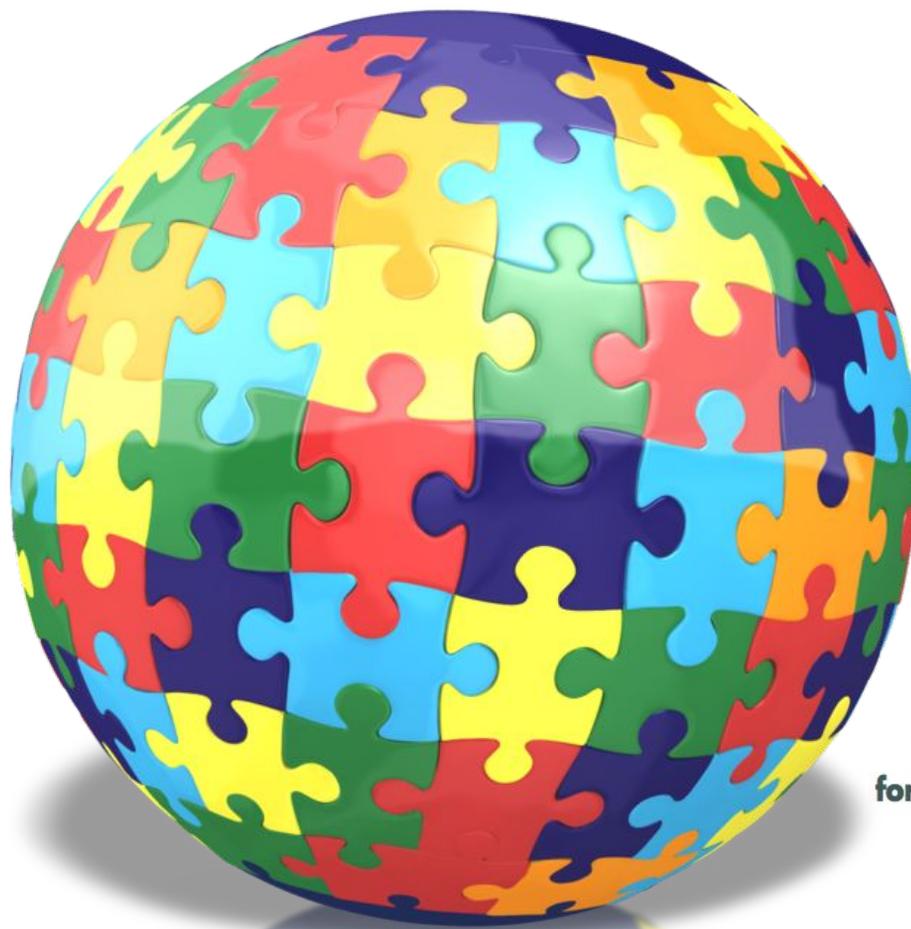




# Accomplished Leadership Series



## Action-Based Conversation Frameworks A Facilitator's Guide to Exploring Accomplished Practice in Leadership



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**National Board Core Propositions  
for Accomplished Educational Leaders™**

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