

A Crisis of Leadership

In Vermont, and across the nation, we are in the midst of a crisis of leadership in public education. At a time when school leadership is essential for creating high quality learning experiences for all students, there is a high rate of turnover of school leaders, a decline in the pool of interested and qualified applicants and insufficient support for those who hold leadership positions. Only when leaders know their efforts are making a meaningful impact on learning for all students will job satisfaction increase and rapid turnover come to an end.

Leading public schools today is an increasingly complex and demanding task. So filled are the days with matters that demand attention, it is difficult to find the time to step back and together reflect on the larger purpose of our work.

What is the school district trying to achieve?

What needs to be accomplished to meet district goals?

How does my current work contribute to the district goals and to student learning?

What is my responsibility and who is responsible for the other expectations?

How will we monitor our progress and measure our success?

Would everyone on your leadership team arrive at the same answers to the above questions? Is there a systematic focus to the operation of your district? Random acts of excellence are not enough to consistently and continually improve student learning. School leadership teams need to reach consensus in critical areas to lay the foundation for systematic, focused and effective efforts by all.

Leadership can not be accomplished by any one person; rather effective leadership comes from teams of individuals working in concert toward a clear and strong educational vision with a shared set of assumptions of how they operate, clear and common expectations regarding what needs to be done and who is responsible, trust in each other's ability and intentions, and an agreement on the measures of progress in meeting goals. **It is incumbent upon every educational leader in the state to take this challenge seriously and work with other leaders within their district to ensure their leadership is working as a team with a focus on high quality student learning.**

