

Examining My Role as an Effective School Leadership in an Urban Setting

Synthesis Paper

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Abstract

I believe effective leadership is at the core of every successful school. I would strive to collaboratively create a vision and establish a climate for my learning community to reach its highest level of achievement. It would be my goal to communicate the school's vision and direct all actions toward achieving that vision. The increasing diversity of school communities places a premium on school leaders who can create a vision of success for all students and use their skills in communication, collaboration, and community building to ensure that the vision comes to fruition. As such, my learning environment would be one in which diversity is recognized, accepted, and celebrated. Ultimately, as an educational leader, I will strive to inspire others, consistently search for new knowledge and pedagogy, set high expectations, and provide the opportunity for students and staff to succeed.

“If quality teaching is to occur in every classroom, all teachers must be supported in turn by skillful principals who work in systems that support their sustained development as instructional leaders....Quality teaching in all classrooms and skillful leadership in all schools will not occur by accident. They require the design and implementation of the most powerful forms of professional development....”(Sparks ,2002, p. 12)

Part I:

As I approach the summit of my two year journey toward becoming an educational leader, I now realize that similarly to when I began teaching, I don't have all the answers and I am not expected to. The more experiences I have, the greater my knowledge base which provides me with more resources to draw from and scenarios to think about as I confront problems when they arise. I've learned that I am a transformational leader and that I approach situations mostly from the humanistic and symbolic realms. I know that it would be important for me to have people grounded in the political and structural domain as part of my learning community to complement my beliefs and to help our learning community become diversified in its beliefs and actions.

As a result of my experiences thus far, I've been able to recognize particular areas that I would like to strengthen because they will enable me to attain my vision. As an educator, one of the greatest challenges that I encounter is looking at my extremely diverse classroom and realizing that there are many things that my students need that in the classroom alone, I cannot provide. I know that there are many programs out there that would benefit my school and my students and as an educational leader, having

resources available to students and families will help students become lifelong learners. I want to become more proficient now in learning how to assess the needs of the whole learning community, seek out programs that would meet those needs and finding ways, like writing grants to bring these programs to the learning community. I believe that the additional support will enhance student achievement and have a positive effect on the climate within the school.

Another area that I am very eager to strengthen is my ability to facilitate a group effectively using consensus building skills. I have watched so many administrators squander precious time and hinder a group of enthusiastic hard-working educators from doing something meaningful because of their lack of ability to facilitate a group. In my district, we have a staff rich with experiences, knowledge, and educational backgrounds, but I feel like many of those resources are under-utilized, which is what I want to prevent from happening as an administrator. By learning how to facilitate a group, especially a newly formed committee like my school's discipline committee, and having the experience of working with colleagues who are challenging or cynical, it would better prepare me for how to lead the whole learning community to inspire lifelong learners. Just like classroom management is essential to teaching, so is unifying and inspiring a learning community to action for an educational leader.

The myriad of responsibilities of an educational leader do not seem as daunting as they did two months ago. I feel like I have a course of action for continuing to grow as a leader and the most exciting thing is that I have been able to identify the assets that I have as an educational leader to offer a school district. Ron Edmonds (1979) suggested that to be truly effective a school must challenge all students, and must close the achievement

gap between students from low and high socioeconomic backgrounds. In addition, Edmonds stated that high expectations for students, particularly those from diverse backgrounds, and effective family/community involvement are cornerstones of effective schools research. He goes on to say that schools must have a climate of high expectations reflected in staff and family beliefs, and must demonstrate that all students can attain mastery of the essential content and school skills.

Reference Page

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