

Malaysia education blueprint plan education essay



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BUSTER**

Malaysia Education Blueprint Plan 2013-2025 is the result of extensive research and public engagement carried out by the Ministry of Education.

The Blueprint has been developed with three specific objectives: –

Understanding the current performance and challenges of the Malaysian education system, with a focus on improving access to education, raising standards (quality), closing achievement gaps (equity), promoting unity amongst students, and maximising system efficiency

Establishing a clear vision and aspirations for individual students and the education system as a whole over the next 13 years

Outlining a comprehensive transformation programme for the system, including key changes to the Ministry which will allow it to meet new demands and rising expectations, and to ignite and support overall civil service transformation.

(Education Blueprint 2013-2025, 2012).

The MoE has outlined 11 shifts that will need to occur in order to transform the country's education system. Each of these shifts should have an impact on at least one of the five aspirations of the Malaysian education system, namely access, quality, equity, unity and efficiency. The fifth shift in this plan is to ensure high-performing school leaders in every school. High-performing principals are needed because the quality of the principal is the biggest school-based factor in determining student outcomes. International research on school leadership shows that an outstanding principal – one who is focused on instructional and not administrative leadership – can raise

student outcomes by as much as 20% (Education Blueprint 2013-2025, 2012).

Training Model: The Instructional Leadership Training for New Principals

Introduction

Instructional leadership can be defined as “ those actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning.” In practice, this means that the principal encourages educational achievement by making instructional quality the top priority of the school and brings that vision to realization. The role of an instructional leader differs from that of traditional school administrator in a number of meaningful ways. Whereas a conventional principal spends the majority of his/her time dealing with strictly administrative duties, a principal who is an instructional leader is charged with redefining his/her role to become the primary learner in a community striving for excellence in education. As such, it becomes the principal’s responsibility to work with teachers to define educational objectives and set school-wide or district wide goals, provide the necessary resources for learning, and create new learning opportunities for students and staff.

Fullan (1991) makes the statement that “ The role of the principal has become dramatically more complex, overloaded, and unclear over the past decade” (p. 144). Indeed, the role of the principal has been in a state of transition, progressing from the principal as an instructional leader or master teacher, to the principal as a transactional leader and, most recently, to the role of transformational leader. Much has been written in the literature

concerning the importance of the instructional leadership responsibilities of the principal. Clearly, improved education for our children requires improved instructional leadership.

Instructional leadership is a collaborative learning environment where learning is not confined to the classroom and is the objective of all educators. Instructional leadership is an important departure from the ancient model of administrator as authoritarian. Inherent in the concept is the idea that learning should be a top-down process. If those in charge of the school are excited about learning, then they will share their enthusiasm throughout the community. Those who learn to be instructional leaders acquire many characteristics that are beneficial to their schools and communities. Instructional leaders exhibit a clear sense of direction for their schools and prioritize and focus attention on the things that really matter in terms of the work of students. Furthermore, instructional leaders know what is happening in their classrooms and develop the capacities of staff by building on their strengths and reducing their weaknesses. These leaders also attempt to sustain improvement and change in their schools by anticipating and overcoming the obstacles that inevitably will emerge along the way.

The need of instructional leadership training for new principals

The success of a school in terms of student's outcomes depends on the school leadership. Robinson (2007) emphasize that the impact on student outcomes is very large when there is a direct involvement by the principal or headmaster of the activities in school including teaching and learning

activities. This means that the quality of school management and leadership is seen as a key to school performance (Edmond 1979, Bush and Forman 1998). This is also agreed by Mortimore (1988), Stoll and Fink (1996) which states that the study of the characteristics of effective schools emphasize the importance of the quality of school leadership. Meanwhile, Sammons (1995) also identified eleven factors of school effectiveness. He found that the leadership factor is given a high value. He stated that almost all studies on the effectiveness of primary and secondary schools to demonstrate leadership is a major factor. This statement is also agreed by Reynolds and Teddlie (2000) which states that the leadership shown by the teacher or principal is important in generating efficiency of the school.

The importance of the instructional leadership training for new principals

A number of studies have been carried out across the past three decade linking the high-quality leadership with positive school outcomes.

Recognition of the importance of school leadership has led to increased attention to recruiting and preparing school leaders. Many new principal preparation and development programs emphasize the role of principals as “instructional leaders.” This emphasis on instructional leadership was driven in large part by the effective schools movement of the 1970s and 1980s and has since been renewed because of increasing demands that school leaders be held accountable for student performance (Hallinger 2005).

Inherent in the concept of instructional leadership is the notion that learning should be given top priority while everything else revolves around the enhancement of learning. Instructional leaders need to know what is going

on in the classroom. Without this knowledge, they are unable to appreciate some of the problems teachers and students encounter. Instructional leaders need to work closely with students, developing teaching techniques and methods as a means for understanding teacher perspectives and for establishing a base on which to make curricular decisions.

The Model of Instructional Leadership Training for New Principals

Input

New Principal

New principal is a person who is being elected to the position of principal.

The importance of the instructional leadership responsibilities of the principal cannot be ignored, nor can the reality that good leadership skills are seldom practiced. Principals require information and skills in order to support practices of instructional leadership in their schools. They need to know what effective instructional leadership is and how to become an effective instructional leader.

Process

Intervisitation

Intervisitation is carried out in the expectation that principals will continuously learn from one other. Visits by one principal to another's school may be initiated by the individuals involved or promoted by the District officers as specific needs of a principal are identified. Either way, intervisitations are built around a specific practice that the visiting principal wants to learn by observing and analyzing activity in another school. A

school may be known for excellent practice in guided reading or shared reading; it may have instituted particularly effective teacher study groups on mathematics teaching, or its principal may have been successful at overcoming teacher resistance to the extra work involved in shared study of student writing. Whatever its particular “ expertise,” a school will attract as visitors principals who want to learn or improve a particular leadership practice. During a typical intervisitation, the two principals will walk through classrooms together, sit in on staff meetings, and discuss and analyze the specific issues of practice and implementation that are the reason that a particular visit has been scheduled. Sometimes the visiting principal will invite the host to visit his/her school to comment on early attempts at initiating a new leadership practice or improving an ongoing one. In such cases, planned intervisitations can lead to the more informal “ buddying”.

Buddying

It is an informal professional sharing, initiated and sustained by principals themselves. Principals buddy with one or two other principals, with whom they meet informally but frequently, to share problems and strategies of professional development and leadership in their schools. Sometimes professional buddies become long-term friends; other times they have short-term relationships in which one principal asks another for help on some current problem. Buddying and intervisitation, like support groups, also create pressure on principals for improvement in their schools because the conventional barriers of professional privacy fall. With regular visits to each other’s schools and frequent requests for help, there is more knowledge among principals of practices in schools throughout the district than is

typical elsewhere, where principals are often discouraged from leaving their buildings during school time and in which difficulties are hidden or masked.

Mentor Principal

The principal mentoring program extends coaching beyond what central office people themselves can provide. In the mentoring program, principals who are judged to need help are guided by principals who are judged to be more expert. Mentoring relationships are established by district leadership, with careful attention to matching individuals in terms of personal compatibility and similarity of school needs. Principals chosen as mentors are sometimes the most experienced in the district, but demonstrated expertise in instructional leadership rather than time-in-role determines who will be chosen as a mentor. Principal mentors-who retain responsibility for their own schools-often work with two or more principals, visiting their schools regularly and receiving visits, advising on how to refine goals, objectives, and budgets, and helping to develop plans for work with specific teachers. Mentor principals may meet once per month in which they discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their coaching and the general problems of mentoring.

Output

Instructional principal

As instructional leader, the principal is the pivotal point within the school who affects the quality of individual teacher instruction, the height of student achievement, and the degree of efficiency in school functioning. Thus, the above mentioned process will be referred to, concerning what makes for effective leadership.

Findley and Findley (1992) state that “ if a school is to be an effective one, it will be because of the instructional leadership of the principal” (p. 102). Flath (1989) concurs: “ Research on effective schools indicates that the principal is pivotal in bringing about the conditions that characterize effective schools” (p. 20). Ubben and Hughes (cited in Findley & Findley, 1992) claim that “ although the principal must address certain managerial tasks to ensure an efficient school, the task of the principal must be to keep focused on activities which pave the way for high student achievement” (p. 102). If our goal is to have effective schools, then we must look at ways to emphasize instructional leadership.

Conclusion

Strong instructional leadership is essential for a school to be successful. The process of learning to become an instructional leader is a complex, multidimensional task. If principals believe that growth in student learning is the primary goal of schooling, then it is a task worth learning. In today’s rapidly changing world that means becoming a leader of leaders by learning and working with teachers, students, and parents to improve instructional quality. The leadership of the principal is pivotal in ensuring that the process is informed of all school issues, especially those which relate to student instruction.

There are three major areas where learning is required if a principal is to become an instructional leader: a knowledge base, task understandings, and appropriate skills. The knowledge base includes the research on effective schools and teaching, on instructional administration, and familiarity with the processes of change. Also, one should understand educational philosophies

and beliefs and, ultimately, be able to determine the strengths and weaknesses of one's own philosophy. Instructional leadership tasks relate to the knowledge base and are varied. They include supervision and evaluation of instruction, staff development activities, curriculum development knowledge and activities, group development knowledge and activities, action research, development of a positive school climate, and the creation of links between school and community.

If a principal possesses this background, he/she will likely become an effective leader of leaders – sharing, facilitating, and guiding decisions about instructional improvement for the betterment of children's education. Instructional improvement is an important goal, a goal worth seeking, and a goal, when implemented, that allows both students and teachers to control their own destiny in making a more meaningful learning environment.

Validity and Reliability of the Model