

Standards for school district leadership



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Carols Ramirez Since its development in 1994 the standards of Educational Leadership have pursued promoting an understanding on what is expected from the educational administration field. L The goal of this paper is to present a personal appraisal of a connection between the ELECT standards and my own experiences in district leadership and a reflection on my professional practice of the standards. It is implicit that an educational leader should promote the success of every student by advocating and effectively implementing the 6 standards of Educational Leadership.

Standard 1. A Vision of Learning Standard 2. A Strong School Culture and Instructional Program Standard 3. A Safe, Efficient, and Effective Learning Environment Standard 4. Responsive Leader Behavior Standard 5. Ethical Leader Behavior Standard 6. Negotiating the Complex Educational Environment Standard 1: A Vision of Learning As stated in the Standards for Advanced Programs in Educational Leadership by The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NEAP), the first standard builds on the need to prepare educational leaders who value and are committed to educating all students to become successful adults.

Every educational leader is responsible for creating and articulating a vision for high standards for learning. Furthermore, the motivation and participation of all stakeholders in a school community in the process to develop, articulate, implement, and support a Vision for Learning is the key factor for the leader practice. This process requires from the leader reflective skills, data-based decision making, delegating and empowering skills that allows for professional growth of the educational staff and the commitment of the community stakeholders to support and sustain the vision of learning.

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In my experience as a district Coordinator of Instructional Technology of the Mount Vernon City School District (2004-2010) I witnessed our Superintendent of School and the entire Executive Cabinet go through the process of developing and updated Vision for Learning that involved multiple stakeholders organizations from School Teachers and their Union Representation, PTA Organization, Building Principals, District Administrators, and the Board of Education.

I actively participated in the process which allowed me to understand many of the challenges that a district leader needs to face to first understand the school community, and then foster a climate conducive to inclusion and promotion of the development of a Vision for Learning appropriate to their own reality. I felt that after a full school year of gatherings, engagements and discussions the District Leadership finalized a Vision for Learning for the district that the Board of Education not only embraced but also the entire school district community owned.

This process also motivated multiple efforts to develop plans that will determine specific action items to support and sustain the Vision of Learning, such as Comprehensive Education Plans for every School Building and District, Professional Development Plan, Instructional Technology Plan, etc. However, change in district leadership and the Board of Education and other political dilemmas delayed some of the great initiatives for the following years.

A good lesson learned; it is important including stakeholders not only at the development and implementation stage but also ensuring their active

participation in the sustainability of the plan and efforts to keep the Vision going. Standard 2: A Strong School Culture and Instructional Program I see a link between the first and second standard by recognizing the need for a Vision for learning to be implemented after careful analyses of the data and the fostering of a Strong School Culture and Instructional Program that capitalizes on Professional Development and continues Professional Growth of the education professionals.

Returning to my personal experience in Met. Vernon SD, I worked developing the District Instructional Technology Plan -TIP in alignment with Part 100. 12 of the NYSE Commissioner of Education Regulations. 4 The experience evolving and articulating the TIP with multiple stakeholders of the school and district community such school teachers, school librarians, district content area directors and a member from the board of education as well as parents from elementary, middle and high school Pats showed me how important was to be flexible and capable to build on the collaboration and the particular views and strengths of the stakeholders.

We were able to present an Instructional Technology Plan that guide major adoptions in technology for the schools with special emphasis on the integration of technology to teaching and learning. Once implementation began we were able to see Interactive Whiteboards in every classroom in the High School and most core content area classrooms in the middle school.

Elementary was reserved to a second year and every classroom and School Library was included in the initiative. The plan was owned by the stakeholders and they were engaged in professional development to take full

advantage of the technologies. In general, as stated in the Standards for Advanced Programs in Educational Leadership by The NEAP, educational leaders need to place teaching and learning as the focus for schools and districts.

To this effect, all educational leaders from district to school level are responsible to ensure that decisions about curriculum, instructional strategies (including instructional technology), assessment, and professional development are based on sound educational research, best practices, school and district data and other contextual information that permits collaboration and design of meaningful and effective experiences for student improvement capitalizing on diversity and creating a school culture of respect and success for all students.

Educational Leaders need to be able to include all members of the school community to ensure buy-in, integrity and appropriateness of the decision making process for school improvement thus ensuring dignity and respect for all. Communication plays a big role in this process ensuring that the leaders can address any barriers that could prevent student learning with any stakeholder as well as set priorities for the development of learning strategies for diverse populations.

This standard also requires the educational leaders to be learners who model and encourage life-long learning, by setting a culture of high expectations for themselves, their students and staff and holding everyone accountable on a regular basis. 5 Standard 3. A Safe, Efficient, and Effective Learning Environment By managing the organization, operations, and resources in a

way that promotes a safe, efficient and effective learning environment, the educational leader enhances the student learning.

In addition, the knowledge of the organization empowers the leader to create a learning environment conducive to the success of all students. The proper allocation of human resources, facilities and technology are essential to creating an effective learning environment. Appropriate management of the resources and decision making oriented to prioritize teaching and learning is required from the leader. Due diligence and accountability to the school community as well as skills in General Management, labor law and relevant collective bargaining agreements reinforce the ability to use personnel resources.

Leaders should be capable of seeking for financial resources, involve stakeholders in the management as allowed by the law, exercise conflict resolution, consensus building, group processes and effective communication competencies. The best example, I can cite in my personal experience as district administrator is developing a Technology Budget when working for Hempstead FUSS as District Director of Technology and CIO. I was able to identify and capitalize in the human resources available by reorganizing and re-purposing the technical staff to primarily focus on technical support to teaching and learning.

I identified the need for a help desk automated solution that allowed the creation of Job tickets for every support request call and monitor the time of resolution and set metrics on customer service and effectiveness. In addition, identifying the needs for additional financial resources and in

compliance with fiscal regulations we were able to maximize benefits of financing via our local BOCCE the acquisition via lease to own of about 1,600 desktop computers (3 per classroom) plus all cabling and networking items for every classroom in grades k-8 for the entire district.

During the planning process my team and I were able to include stakeholders from each school such principals, Parents, and teachers which enable us to deliver the message of the benefits expected in terms of teaching and learning even before we presented our initiative ND got approval from the board of education.

A lesson learned from this experience was the need to keep good track at every step of the planning process when using resources to clearly identify before stakeholders that cost effectiveness and savings of a new adoption, being cognizant of the taxpayers and the appropriateness of the process for the most important goal of promoting teaching and learning. Standard 4.

Responsive Leader Behavior One of the most challenging standards to meet by educational leaders is to have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by collaborating with implies and other community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and monopolizing community resources. This means the expectation of the leader to be capable of persuade and motivate the participation of community, families to positively affect student learning. Leaders must see the schools as part of the larger community.

Therefore, communications plays a big role on how the leader interacts with families, local businesses, governmental agencies, social service

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organizations, the media, and higher education institutions to promote effective schooling. The ultimate goal is to earn continued community support for schools. 6 Collaborations and partnerships empower good relationships with Community Based Organizations (Cobs) as well as outreach to local businesses, religious, political and service agencies.

To work with all elements of the community, leaders must recognize value, and communicate effectively with various cultural, ethnic, racial, and special interest groups. Leaders should model collaboration for staff and then offer opportunities for staff to develop collaborative skills to maximize positive interactions between schools and the community. During my tenure in Hempstead FUS, I witnessed the need for this responsive approach on an educational leader.

Our Director of Food Services came to my office looking for help to move the district into a Community Eligibility Program (CAPE) Status for the National School Lunch Program. However the information provided was not in a friendly format and the process of Direct Certification involved identifying parents of children attending the district receiving SNAP or other AS Assistance out of a list provided by the County Department of Social Services. First we tried working out of the list by last name, phone numbers and addresses; there was no unique identifier such as social security or other.

Then we reached out to the agency and we were able to identify additional resources that we could contact and ask for assistance such as the Churches, The Town of Hempstead and other COBS conducting programs in partnership with Social Services, we added our PTA and Social Workers Staff, and

working in collaboration we were able to identify more and more parents that were eligible for Free lunch for their children. In a couple of months we were able to reach and pass the minimum requirement of 52. % of the total student population to get Free lunches to all children in elementary to high school level under the umbrella of the federal CAPE status.

Another lesson learned, once the CAPE status was earned it remained for four years. When it required re-certification and due to the collaboration built among the Community, COBS and Agencies the district did not have difficulties re-certifying this year again, even though I am not working in the district anymore, the sustainability of the program is guarantee due to the ownership by the community, district and their partners. An Educational should have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairly, and in an ethical manner.

This addresses the role of the leaders as a model citizen of the school district and community. Educational Leaders should set the tone for how their staff and students interact with one another and other members of the larger community. Educational leaders should have a strong set of core personal and professional ethical values. They should be able to accept responsibility for using their position ethically and constructively on behalf of the school/district community. An educational leader is an advocate for children including those undeserved due to special needs of limited English proficiency. I can relate to this standard in my professional practice as district administrator, exercising due diligence and ethical behavior on behalf of children, parents, taxpayers and community in general while working at Hempstead FUS. During my tenure as Director of Technology I conducted a <https://assignbuster.com/standards-for-school-district-leadership/>

full review of the residency status of students in the district as well as provided with suggestions to better implement the transportation services for students including students with special needs and those out of district schooling.

A serious mismanagement of the resources was happening due to the a specific process put in place by which students were not required to provide residency status at the beginning of the school year during the process of central registration. We established minimal requirements for proof of residency and we were able to identify many cases where the services in transportation weren't warranted or entitled saving the district resources that could be redirected to attend other needs such as students with special needs and Leaps.

Educational leaders should have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context. This standard demands that a leader should first understand and then be capable to respond to the needs of the students and members of the school community by influencing the larger political and complex educational environment that includes, Local, State, and Federal authorities, policy makers, regulations, etc. Advocating for equitable learning opportunities and success for all students regardless of socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicity, gender, usability or other individual characteristics. I consider this standard one of the biggest challenges to effective educational leaders, the leader needs to keep him or her informed and capable to build on current trends, research and methods improvement in educational opportunities for children and

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adults promoting appropriate responses and action items that will ensure success for all students regardless of socio economics or demographics.

I consider this qualities and capabilities key for the success of the educational leader demonstrating his condition of leader and the ability to influence the larger context. My experience with this standard relates to my search for knowledge and understanding of the educational needs first at my local, regional, state and federal level.

Recently, working at NYSE Education Department, I was able to identify a undeserved group of non-traditional students by one of the largest funding sources presently available E-Rate (FCC Funding for Connectivity and Technology Infrastructure that works as a discount for services for eligible schools and libraries) The group was the Adult Education programs throughout the state of New York. A total of 120 programs with a greater number of stand-alone locations where young adults and adults engage in studies for a High School Equivalency Diploma (HOSE) program were not eligible and now are potentially eligible.

I engaged with first local, regional and state level authorities that work these programs and identify their structure, educational goals and particulars facilitating the inclusion and the benefit. I think that the key for this standard was the ability to collaborate and communicate with the authorities and administration of these programs outside my regular interaction with k-12 promoting the educational opportunity for all learners.