

# Leadership Principles for School Improvement & Change

	<b>Clarity of Focus &amp; Unifying Purpose</b> 	<b>Inquiry &amp; Reflection</b> 	<b>Relationships &amp; Culture</b> 	<b>Process &amp; Structure</b> 	<b>Communication</b> 
<b>WHAT IT IS</b>	School leaders working collaboratively to establish vision and goals that includes the <i>what</i> you will achieve, <i>how</i> you will achieve it, and <i>why</i> it is imperative. This provides clarity of focus, which leaders use as a means for unifying teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders around a common purpose. Together focus and purpose guide decisions and actions.	School leaders engaging in “reflection-in-action” and “reflection-on-action.” Inquiry and reflection requires consciously and critically examining practices, values and beliefs, actions and interactions, and experiences while learning from our examination. Using evidence from experience, research, and practice to inform decisions and actions.	School leaders creating a school culture that is attentive to the patterns of beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, norms, relationships, and even written and unwritten rules. Culture influences what things get done, how they get done, and even who will get them done. Relationships develop through interactions, communication, collaborations, and common activities.	School leaders establishing processes and structures to support vision and intended goals. Processes—steps, actions, means of operating—are needed to achieve a different state of being, such as decision-making and communication. Structure includes how the school, teams, jobs, and work are organized and coordinated; who has authority, control, and governance and for what; and supports in place to support progress towards aims.	School leaders use communication as a tool to share, get, or exchange information and ideas between and among individuals and groups. It may occur in verbal, nonverbal, and written forms. Leaders attend to the openness, fluidity, frequency, and nature of communications to increase shared understandings of tasks, expectations, action steps, and decisions.
<b>WHY IT MATTERS</b>	A clear focus and unifying purpose motivates, empowers, provides direction, and informs strategies to achieve goals. A clear focus and unifying purpose keeps individuals and organizations attentive to the vision and mission. It can eliminate distractions that deter efforts to achieve goals and provides guidance for specific, concrete actions.	A leader who prioritizes inquiry and reflection promotes a learning culture that uses evidence to guide organizational improvement and change. An inquiry and reflection-driven stance leads to higher personal investment in both the process and outcomes.	Relationships and culture support student and adult interactions and learning by consciously creating shared meaning and purpose. Positive school culture and relationships enhance clarity, coherence, commitment, and trust. They also increase empowerment and individual and collective efficacy. A professionally supportive environment fosters innovation, creativity, and continuous improvement and learning.	Attending to process and structure supports groups or individuals manage expectations and emotions associated with change. They also provide feedback earlier for mid-term corrections, improve communication and clarity of actions, and enhance engagement and the quality of implementation.	Effective communication improves engagement and productivity, increases problem solving, work satisfaction and quality, and interpersonal relationships. It also builds team identity, reduces misunderstanding, provides pathways to collaboration, and solution finding. It builds a non-threatening climate of learning and trust.
<b>EXAMPLES (MINDSETS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having a sense of urgency</li> <li>• Willingness to take risks</li> <li>• Being clear about values and purpose</li> <li>• Recognizing that equity and excellence can go hand-in-hand</li> <li>• Demonstrating perseverance and passion for long-term goals</li> <li>• Strategically planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being cognitively engaged</li> <li>• Being flexible and adaptable</li> <li>• Being evidence-based</li> <li>• Examining a broad range of data</li> <li>• Having a positive attitude toward innovation</li> <li>• Seeing opportunities to learn and grow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valuing others strengths</li> <li>• Being open to diverse perspectives</li> <li>• Honoring where people are and starting from there</li> <li>• Having the belief that everyone can learn and grow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinking systemically</li> <li>• Taking a holistic approach</li> <li>• Seeing how parts fit together</li> <li>• Seeing how all the parts are interdependent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willing to be transparent</li> <li>• Being open to giving and taking feedback in a timely manner</li> <li>• Valuing shared understanding</li> </ul>
<b>NON-EXAMPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trying to address too many things that are not aligned</li> <li>• Starting new programs or projects without a clear rationale for how it supports the vision</li> <li>• Letting day-to-day distractions take away from important actions that support the vision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not questioning assumptions or practices</li> <li>• Being ok with the status quo</li> <li>• Not wanting to rock the boat</li> <li>• Focusing solely on test results and not considering other types of data (e.g., student engagement observations, stakeholder surveys)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not taking into account others perspectives, feelings, or needs</li> <li>• Writing people off (students, teachers, etc.) as not having the ability to change or grow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staying caught in the details without planning for how the desired changes will be accomplished</li> <li>• Doing the same things because it has “always been done this way.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telling others what to do one time and expecting things to happen</li> <li>• Sending multiple messages with different language to mean the same thing</li> <li>• Not following up in a timely manner</li> </ul>