

SCHOOL LEADER PARADIGM

Setting Goals for Your Success

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PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Ensuring School Safety, Planning with Data, Aligning Curriculum, Improving Instruction, Managing Resources, Engaging Communities, Closing the Gap



AWSP executive staff spent time this past summer working in partnership with our friends at the Illinois Principal Association.

We focused on the complexities of school leadership and how to use the School Leader Paradigm as a tool to help principals organize their thinking. Given that all principals lead goal setting for their staff and set their own goals as well, why not get comfortable with the paradigm and use this tool to plan for your own evaluation and guide the goal setting process?

THE SCHOOL LEADER PARADIGM

Effective leaders pay attention to their professional goal setting through the use of the School Leader Paradigm. We must keep growing our personal leadership skills and attributes, while paying close attention to the work we need to accomplish. Setting goals to support the principal's personal development (**becoming**) while taking a healthy look at what is currently in place, and the leadership actions supporting staff and students (**doing**) in the upcoming school year, is critical. It is also important to take time to pause, reflect and be open to feedback you've received from staff climate surveys, parent feedback, and your direct supervisor. Digging a little deeper into the intelligences and corresponding attributes in the paradigm can act as a resource to provide examples and definitions. It will support you in gaining ideas for potential actions.

The "doing" side of the School Leader Paradigm is a visual comprised of three overlapping circles that school leaders may want to consider using in their goal setting process. Effective leaders are measured by what they **do** in the areas of culture, systems, and learning. Thinking through how your actions and work align within these three areas can help a school

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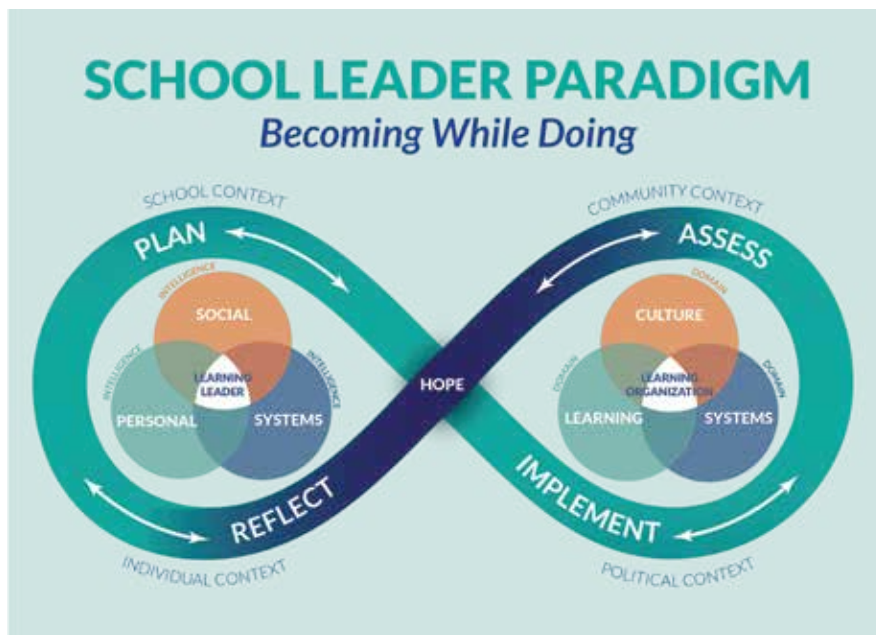
leader be goal oriented, focused, and intentional. As the goal setting season begins, many leaders are excited for the restart and how they might want to reinvent their focus based on culture and data results. However, it's critical the principal takes stock of what leadership practices and systems are currently in place and build on these foundations. The School Leader Paradigm can help a team pay attention to the personal leadership areas to develop and focus energy around the leadership actions and practices needed to support the whole system.

CULTURE

The effective principal is a vigilant protector of the school's culture and is responsive to influences on culture. Creating a school culture that promotes the ongoing improvement of teaching and learning for students and staff is a priority – a priority that is never completed. As you move into your personal goal setting this year, reflect on the big ideas/initiatives your school will be implementing. As a leader, are you being intentional with what you say and do to build a culture where these initiatives can be embraced and supported? Are you being clear and transparent in your communication to all stakeholders about where you're headed, what it is your school is working to implement, and the results you expect to attain? How do you celebrate and encourage staff and students?

Being clear about your vision as the leader is helpful in making sure your school culture stays healthy through the implementation of a new system or new instructional practice. The personal and social intelligence attributes listed on the "becoming" side of the paradigm can also serve

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as a resource for the principal as they think through the goals they will set to continue “becoming” the most effective leader possible.

SYSTEMS

Schools are full of systems with many interconnected parts that form their complex world. Any school leader who tried to change the parent-teacher conference format or implement a reading intervention period in a secondary master schedule understands the devil is in the details. The effective leader puts time and energy into collaborating with key stakeholders to ensure effective systems are in place and takes the time to evaluate regularly.

Reflecting on the upcoming year, what systems are currently in place? Have you collected feedback on their effectiveness? What tweaks are necessary to make incremental improvements? Evaluating your systems, creating mechanisms for reflection, collecting feedback, and problem solving around the

systems pieces that crop up is critical. As programs, initiatives, and instructional practices are implemented, the principal pays close attention to improving systems for efficiency, clarity, cultural responsiveness, and ultimately student success. Spending time upfront evaluating the health of your school's systems can enhance your ability as the principal to meet the needs of students, staff, and families. Refining systems to be most effective and monitoring for student growth results can be powerful. Don't forget to look for more detailed descriptions within the “becoming” side of the leadership paradigm for ideas and support.

LEARNING

Learning is not just for students and it doesn't have to be “new” or “hot off the press.” As an effective leader, it's important to look at the adult learning necessary for success. In order to build on the success of your existing culture and systems, take stock of areas where you need to communicate and clarify. Has focus shifted because of a new curriculum adoption? Have you had a large turnover in staff and do folks need to be anchored to the work?

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Adult learning consists of going back and refreshing the “why” behind an initiative or being explicit by sharing tools and resources for stronger implementation of a program. Effective leaders take the time to connect the dots for their staff and to ensure they have the skills and training to deliver the instruction. They take the time to evaluate their systems and programs and coach their staff by helping to develop their own skills and aptitudes to best implement programs and instructional initiatives.

PRINCIPAL COLLABORATION & NETWORKING

School leaders cannot do complex work in isolation. Principaling is tough work! An awesome opportunity awaits the principals willing to work alongside other principals, helping each other talk through their work and generate great ideas. Effective leaders also build capacity within their buildings for other adults to engage at high levels.

Have you reached out to other busy principals to discuss and collaborate around your professional goal setting? In your building, are you growing the capacity of other adults to lead? How do you use the teacher-leaders your staff respects and listens to in ways that move your school forward? The effective principal does all of these things: models collaboration

with peers, encourages staff to lead amongst their peers, involves staff in collecting and interpreting feedback, and offers next-step solutions. Building capacity should be an important part of yearly leadership goal-setting. It’s a meaningful way to involve more leaders in school improvement efforts!

Everything a school leader does on a daily basis is linked back to the School Leader Paradigm through explicit and intentional leadership around a school’s culture, it’s systems, and the adult or student learning taking place. Realizing you are “becoming” an amazing leader as you are intentionally “doing” leadership is important to remember. Connecting your principal goal-setting to these three anchors helps you build on what is already in place and focuses your time and energy on refining and going deeper in these areas. ■

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