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School Leadership: “A CEO Approach to Academic Success”

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What is effective school leadership? There are many possible responses to this question. However, I will attempt to demonstrate a corporate leadership perspective that encompasses strategic school leadership, positive cultural communication, and content-based instruction that may eventually lead to higher student outcomes. If the preceding outcomes are attained, there is the likelihood that staff retention and leadership continuity will sustain itself during any “change agent” (i.e., varied resources, high expectations, modified federal/state regulations, etc.). Therefore, as a school principal/leader, it is essential to understand that running a school is like running a Fortune 500 company because students equal stocks/shares; parents equal shareholders; and teachers equal executive personnel trying to improve their company’s value (school performance) led by the CEO (Chief Educational Officer otherwise known as the school principal). Of course the principal realizes like any other CEO running a company, he/she must produce so that the stocks (students) become so invaluable that the stock/share holders (parents) feel complete satisfaction! However, the principal (like a CEO) must have the support of his/her central office administration (Board of Governors) in order to feel confident and

enthusiastic for long-term success of the school (Fortune 500 Company). If the principal does not feel appreciated nor trust with his/her superiors among other possible factors, that individual may burn out sooner than later and feel less likely to remain for the long haul (organizational reform).

The previous analogies provide the reader with a business-minded approach towards ensuring school growth and leadership stability. For example, I observed how one school program applied the aforementioned thinking to its school by developing new programs and/or revised school curricula to reflect and respect the various cultures, learning styles, and professional experiences of all stakeholders (students, staff, parents, etc.) which ultimately led to significant gains (dividends).

A Long Island, New York school principal introduced and executed the Total Quality Management Operational System (TQMOS)¹, which is a management philosophy geared toward continuously enhancing the quality of products and processes consisting of various elements to maximize the potential of any school program in any municipality.

1. Streamline operational procedures
2. Train personnel on revised program procedures
3. Promote relevant workshops and leadership cohorts
4. Implement a scope and sequence curriculum
5. Mentor and empower all staff
6. Establish cost-efficiencies
7. Facilitate student and parent orientations
8. Promote school, community and industry partnerships

¹ The eight elements from the Total Quality Management Operational System (TQMOS) were extracted from the Effects of the Total Quality Management Operational System on Adult Language Learners' Achievement, available at Amazon; http://www.amazon.com/Management-Operational-language-learners-achievement/dp/124372563X/ref=sr_1_6?s=books

As previously stated, the leadership design above (TQMOS) is applicable to any school program (K-12/Continuing Education), which was evidently successful for a Long Island Adult Learning Center (ALC) referenced in Table 4. This table demonstrates ALC's performance compared to New York State Education Department's (NYSED) benchmarks for three consecutive school years. In Year 1, NYSED's benchmark was 41% but the adult education school did not meet its targets, where only 725 out of 1,848 (39.2%) students made improvement gains. Following the TQMOS implementation, the school made significant gains in Year 2 with nearly a 20% improvement ratio (58%), which was subsequently better in Year 3 (61%). It should be noted for those readers not familiar with Adult Education, may assume 58% or 61% is failing compared to most standard benchmarks but given adult education serves a transient population; their benchmarks can vary each year from state to state.

The rating scale for the NYSED rubric is 1= Unacceptable/Unsatisfactory; 2= Needs Improvement; 3= Proficient/ Meets Expectations; and 4= Highly Proficient/ Exceeds Expectations; and anything below 3 is failing.

Table 4

Source	School Year		
	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
NYSED Benchmarks	41%	46%	46%
Adult Learning Center	39.2%	58%	61%
Gains/Enrollment	725/1,848	1,088/1,891	1,042/1,700
NYSED Rubric	Unacceptable	Proficient	Highly Proficient

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Despite the successes attained after applying the TQMOS model to the adult program above, some researchers still do not specify which leadership system is most effective compared to others because school leadership may also be relative to the school's needs. Supovitz, Sirinides, and May (2010) noted,

Organization reform employs multilevel structural equation modeling to examine the structural relationships between student learning and theorized dimensions of principal leadership, teacher peer influence, and change in teachers' instructional practice. The findings confirm previous empirical work and provide new contributions to research on the chain of hypothesized relationships between leadership practice and student learning. (p. 38)

Moreover, TQMOS is designed to promote a collegial supportive system for long-term personnel retention by virtue of the school principal executing the following;

1. Initiate a deeper understanding of how to support teachers. (This aspect is consistent with *TQMOS #5: Mentor and empower all staff.*)
2. Manage the curriculum in ways that promote student learning. (This aspect is consistent with *TQMOS #4: Implement a scope and sequence curriculum.*)
3. Construct the ability to transform schools into more effective organizations that foster powerful teaching and learning for all students. (This aspect is consistent with *TQMOS #1: Streamline operational procedures.*)

Education leaders must continue to facilitate strategies to address the needs of all learners to close the achievement gap, which should ultimately enhance student development but more importantly, their global readiness. It should not be implied or required initiatives (i.e., STEM, No Child Left behind-NCLB, Race to the Top, etc.) in order for educational

institutions to maximize student learning. Because similar to John Dewey's philosophy, the status quo is not acceptable if we plan to continue to meet the needs of our students and staff in today's increasingly competitive global world.

Last, a principal's philosophy should be to provide his/her school with a rigorous curriculum, productive social interaction and specialty program(s) that enables effective teacher planning and sequential curriculum development that can be closely monitored and/or revised. If this goal happens consistently, most school principals may use this opportunity as a barometer to determine their instructional leadership effectiveness, thus hopefully positioning the school and leader(s) for long-term growth.

Bibliography

Supovitz, J., Sirinides, P., & May, H. (2010). *How principals and peers influence teaching and learning*. *Educational Administration*, 46(1), 31-56.