



Indicator: The principal develops the leadership capacity of others in the school. (4377)

Explanation: The evidence confirms that principals in high-performing schools simultaneously share leadership responsibility and build leadership capacities in their staff. They create, encourage, and support any and all activities that promote the strengthening of professional practices. Often this is achieved through the formation of whole-staff and smaller professional learning communities.

Questions: What evidence will the Leadership Team seek to determine that the principal distributes leadership responsibilities among the staff who demonstrate the competencies to share in leading the school's vision and goals? How will the Leadership Team support the principal in his/her efforts to provide opportunities for all staff to strengthen and grow their professional capacities? How will the Leadership Team work to strengthen the professional practices of the principal?

According to Hallinger and Murphy (2013), "The enterprise of education is centrally concerned with the development of human capacity. Leadership for learning should be focused on capacity development as well (p. 16). While we often think of the teaching and learning happening in a school building being that of the students, it is also incredibly important for teachers to continue to grow as professionals. One of the main avenues for teachers to grow professionally is to take on leadership roles and pursue opportunities both within and outside of the school. As the leader of the school, the principal is primarily responsible for creating an environment that not only provides an excellent education for children but that fosters adult learning and development as well.

How the Principal Can Personally Encourage Staff Leadership and Development

Redding (2006) writes, "As the conductor of culture, the principal attends to both the human elements of the school community and the organization's pursuit of goals (p. 41). It is critical for principals to acknowledge and bolster these "human elements" of their staff members, not only for the quality of the relationships that they build with their employees, but also for each staff member's feelings of value and professional self-efficacy. Murphy (2007) discusses the importance of actions as simple as displaying personal interest in staff members and making time for them when needed. Teachers are more likely to be committed and engaged when a principal genuinely invites them to lead and grow professionally (Marks & Printy, 2003).

Good leaders are also:

...Aggressive in identifying and removing barriers that prevent colleagues from doing their work well. They provide intellectual stimulation and make certain that teachers have a high quality stream of job-embedded opportunities to expand, enhance, and refine their repertoires of instructional skills (Murphy, 2007, p. 74).

Murphy (2007) continues this thought; ensuring that teachers have the resources they need is yet another way that principals show that they value and support their teachers as professionals.

Providing Opportunities for Increased Leadership and Adult Learning

Increasing leadership opportunities for staff members does not simply mean that a principal should delegate tasks or responsibilities haphazardly. It is especially important to remember that delegation does not necessarily guarantee that the staff member has the skills or knowledge to complete that task effectively (Hallinger & Murphy, 2013). Redding (2006) writes that, “The principal’s role is not only to share leadership, but to build the leadership capacity of others in the school” (p. 43). Approaching the running of a school through a collaborative or shared lens is a way that effective leaders begin to build this capacity in their team (Murphy, et al., 2007).

Shared leadership can be defined as facilitating “teachers’ influence over and participation in school-wide decisions” (Walstrom & Seashore-Lewis, 2008). This collective approach not only requires effort on the part of administrators and teachers, but it also diminishes the power structures that typically separate them for the sake of improvement in teaching and learning. This may require principals to let go of traditional ideas about authority and leadership, as shared leadership requires them to not only encourage, but also abide by the initiatives or changes made by their teachers. They may even need to release some of their own responsibility in the process (Marks & Printy, 2003; Walstrom & Seashore-Lewis, 2008).

Principals who practice shared leadership not only reconsider the traditional hierarchy of schools, but they also proactively encourage collaboration among staff members and a sense of school community. Murphy, et al., (2007) write:

Effective school leaders are especially skillful in creating learning organizations and fostering the development of communities of learning. They are vigorous promoters of professional development, they nurture the growth of communities of professional practice, and they shape school organizations to adhere to the principles of community (p. 187).

Encouraging professional growth and providing opportunities to influence enhances “the professionalization of teaching” as a career and can truly empower teachers (Marks & Printy, 2003; Walstrom & Seashore-Lewis, 2008). Marks and Printy (2003) highlight an important point – a system of shared leadership within in a school helps teachers to grow, but also allows them to remain as classroom instructors. Facilitating professional growth for them, whether through collective decision-making or experiences like conferences or trainings, has been shown to have positive impacts on the depth of teachers’ instructional practice (Murphy, 2007; Walstrom & Seashore-Lewis, 2008). This is especially salient when principals encourage teachers to go through these experiences as a collective group, encouraging teachers to implement new practices that they learned and supporting them as they do so (Murphy, 2007).

Principals cannot realistically attend to all of the demands of their job independently; Hallinger and Murphy (2013) therefore write that, “It is essential to reformulate instructional leadership both as a collective identity and in terms of a set of shared functional responsibilities (p. 16). Through a shared vision, values, and workflows, principals “create greater collective capacity and spread the tasks of leadership beyond the principal” (p. 17). Yet it is warned that these shifts do not happen naturally; a principal must intentionally foster a sense of shared leadership in order to reap its benefits (Marks & Printy, 2003).

References and Resources

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