



COLONIAL ASPIRING LEADERS PROGRAM

Colonial Aspiring Leaders Program is one of the possible steps in the journey to become a leader in the Colonial School District. This six-month program is designed to introduce teachers/specialists to the work of successful coaches and/or student advisors by providing them with educational leadership coursework, as well as a shadow experience to learn from successful leaders in the field.

Aspiring Leaders participants will engage in professional development courses that include both leadership and technical training that align with professional standards for educational leaders, as well as the district's four leadership competencies:

1. Talent Development
2. Climate and Culture
3. Instructional Leadership
4. Organizational Leadership

TO BE ELIGIBLE, CANDIDATES MUST:

- Have at least 3 years of effective ratings in a classroom
- Commit to all assigned work and attend all sessions
- Complete and submit a one page essay: *Why I want to be a leader in the Colonial School District.*

REQUIRED MEETING DATES:

Each meeting, held in the Colwyck Resource Room, will last approximately two (2) and a half (1/2) hours. The meeting dates are as follows:

- Monday, November 26, 2018
- Tuesday, January 22, 2019
- Tuesday, February 26, 2019
- Tuesday, March 19, 2019
- Tuesday, April 16, 2019
- Tuesday, May 21, 2019 (Optional Mock Interviews)

COMPENSATION:

CALP is a voluntary program that supports participants in their journey to be leaders within the Colonial School District. In addition to the knowledge that participants will acquire attendees will receive Snow Hours for participation.

TO APPLY:

On November 26, 2018 each aspiring leader must submit a one page essay describing why they want to be a leader in the district. In addition to the essay, each aspiring leader must complete the pre-reading assignment before the session.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership Development Is Self-Development

Everything you will ever do as a leader is based on one audacious assumption. It's the assumption that *you matter*.

Before you can lead others, you have to lead yourself and believe that you can have a positive impact on others. You have to believe that your words can inspire and your actions can move others. You have to believe that what you do counts for something. If you don't, you won't even try. Leadership begins with you.

The truth is that you make a difference.

The question is not, "Will I make a difference?" Rather it is, "What difference will I make?"

Leadership is not preordained. It is not a gene, and it is not a trait. There is no hard evidence to support the assertion that leadership is imprinted in the DNA of only some individuals. Leaders reside in every city and every country, in every function and every organization. Leadership knows no racial or religious bounds, no ethnic or cultural borders. It's not a secret code that can only be deciphered by certain people. It has nothing to do with position or status, and everything to do with *behavior*. It is an *observable set of skills and abilities* that are useful whether one is in the executive suite or on the front line, on Wall Street or Main Street, in your own country or on the other side of the world.



FIRST, LEAD YOURSELF

The quest for leadership is first an inner quest to discover who you are. Through self-development comes the confidence needed to lead. Self-confidence is really awareness of and faith in your own powers. These powers become clear and strong only as you work to identify and develop them.

Learning to lead is about discovering what you care about and value. About what inspires you. About what challenges you. About what gives you power and competence. About what encourages you. When you discover these things about yourself, you'll know what it takes to lead those qualities out of others.

Every leader has to learn the fundamentals and the discipline, and to a certain extent there's some period during which you're trying out a lot of new things. It's a necessary stage in your development as a leader. The point is that you have to take what's been acquired and reshape it into your own expression of yourself.

Sometimes liberation is as uncomfortable as intrusion, but in the end when you discover things for yourself you know that what's inside is what you found there and what belongs there. It's not something put inside you by someone else; it's what you discover for yourself.

THE BEST LEADERS ARE THE BEST LEARNERS

After more than thirty years of research, we know that leadership can be learned. It is an observable pattern of practices and behaviors, and a definable set of skills and abilities. Skills can be learned, and when we track the activities of people who participate in leadership development programs, we observe that they improve over time. They become better leaders as long as they engage in activities that help them learn.

But that does not mean that everyone wants to learn to be a leader, and not all those who learn about leadership master it. Why? Because becoming the best requires having a strong desire to excel, a strong belief that new skills and abilities can be learned, and a willing devotion to deliberate practice and continuous learning.



There's no such thing as instant leadership—or instant expertise of any kind. According to the experts on expertise, what truly differentiates the expert performers from the good performers is hours and hours of practice—deliberate practice. The truth is that the best leaders are the best learners. It is only through deliberate practice—focused, planned learning activities designed to improve a specific aspect of performance, usually with a trainer or coach as a guide—and drawing on proven tools such as this Planner and the LPI that you can develop your leadership capacity. That is true whether you want to improve your strengths—the skills you already have—or strengthen your weaker behaviors.

We feel confident that as long as you assume that you can learn to become a better leader than you are now, you can discover your full leadership potential. You've already started by taking the LPI and learning from the feedback you received. Now we invite you to continue on your lifelong learning journey.



THE FIVE PRACTICES OF EXEMPLARY LEADERSHIP

The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership® and the LPI resulted from an intensive research project to determine the leadership behaviors that are essential to making extraordinary things happen in organizations. That research is what gives credibility to the items on the LPI and the data on the LPI Feedback Report.

Our research clearly indicates that if you do more of the behaviors related to The Five Practices as measured by the LPI, you will get better results in your work, your relationships, and your life. To conduct the research, we collected thousands of “Personal Best” stories—the experiences people recalled when asked to think of a peak leadership experience. Despite differences in individual stories, the Personal-Best Leadership Experiences revealed similar patterns of behavior. The study found that when leaders are at their personal best, they do the following:



MODEL THE WAY

Leaders clarify values by finding their voice and affirming shared values, and they set the example by aligning their actions with the shared values.



INSPIRE A SHARED VISION

Leaders envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities, and they enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations.





CHALLENGE THE PROCESS

Leaders search for opportunities by seizing the initiative and looking outward for innovative ways to improve, and they experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from experience.



ENABLE OTHERS TO ACT

Leaders foster collaboration by building trust and facilitating relationships, and they strengthen others by increasing self-determination and developing competence.



ENCOURAGE THE HEART

Leaders recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence, and they celebrate values and victories by creating a spirit of community.

Each of The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership® corresponds with six behaviors from the thirty-item *Leadership Practices Inventory* (LPI). Across continents, The Five Practices have survived the test of time. Although the context may have changed since we began our work more than thirty years ago, the content has remained constant. The fundamental behaviors, actions, and practices of leaders have remained essentially the same since we first began researching and writing about leadership. Much has changed in the world, but there's a whole lot more that's stayed the same. The Planner is designed to facilitate your exploration of the timeless fundamentals that you must master in order to excel as a leader.

For more detailed information about our research, please visit www.leadershipchallenge.com/go/research.

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Vision as the Compass



It was her very first faculty meeting as a principal. Christine knew this first meeting with the staff would be a pivotal one. She decided she must share her vision in a way that would invite the staff to follow so that, as a consequence, daily life in the building would be guided by a shared vision that places serving students well at the heart of the school and every classroom. After welcoming staff members, Christine explained:

I have a vision that at this school we will create a culture of care. While this is currently my personal vision, I hope it becomes a vision every one of us will come to embrace. I believe that such a shared vision will become a beacon that guides our efforts to make a positive difference in every student's life at this school.

To understand what a culture of care would entail, I'd like us to begin thinking about a time in our own lives when we felt cared for, and I'd like us to share these experiences. I'll take a risk and begin. As a child, I spent a lot of time with my grandmother. She always spoke softly to me, listened carefully, made me laugh, and took time for me. She had raspberry bushes in her yard. Together, we plucked raspberries from the bushes and talked about what we would make with

them. She allowed me to eat as many as I wished! To this day, raspberries remind me of what it feels like to be cared for.

Some staff members looked down, some squirmed in their chairs, others looked up and dabbed tears from their eyes, and still others looked around. Silence fell over the group. Christine's heart was pounding. She wondered if anyone would break the silence.

After what seemed like eternity, a senior member of the staff spoke up and shared her experience with care. Taking her lead, others described their memories.

In the days that followed the staff meeting, Christine began to find small, anonymous gifts in her mailbox—a basket of raspberries, raspberry soap, raspberry-scented candles. She thought, with a smile, “Perhaps creating a culture of care is beginning to emerge as a centerpiece of the schoolhouse.”

Two weeks later, it was kindergarten orientation. Traditionally, a bus went around the neighborhood, picked up parents and kindergartners, and brought them to school. Prior to this day, one parent contacted the school and spoke to the assistant principal about pick-up times. The assistant principal mistakenly indicated a time later than the actual pick up. Hence, on kindergarten orientation day the parent and child missed the bus, and the mother called the school. The assistant principal took her call and said, “Sorry, we’re not a transportation service; you’ll have to find another means of transportation.” The resourceful parent, angered by what had transpired, contacted the district superintendent. He heard the parent’s story and responded empathetically, “Madam, I realize that you’ve probably looked forward to this day for five years. If you give me your address, I will personally drive you to the orientation.”

Unaware that any of this had transpired, Christine spotted the superintendent walking down the hall with parent and child in tow. Interpreting his presence as a special visit to orientation, she approached him and thanked him for coming to the school for this important occasion. He quietly took Christine aside and told her what had transpired, adding, “I have the car seat in my vehicle;

call me when orientation is over, and I'll take them home." Christine responded, "No, give me the car seat, and I'll personally take them home. I want to talk with the mother about what happened. This is not the way we are going to do business around here."

After orientation, Christine invited the mother and child into her office for a chat. She asked the secretary to take her calls so that she could devote undivided attention to the mother and child. She spoke about her vision of a "culture of care" and expressed dismay that the mother's initial experience with the school didn't convey a caring act. She explained that developing a culture of care takes time and would require great commitment on the part of those who serve children at the school. "But," she added, "I believe this vision will become a reality here."

Christine concluded the conversation and walked the mother and child to her car. After everyone was buckled up in their seatbelts, she turned to the mother and said, "I hope you'll give us another chance." The mother nodded and remarked, "I know new ways take time."

The next morning Christine called the assistant principal into her office. Christine told her about the mother's experience on orientation day. And then, she simply asked the assistant, "Is this something that would happen in a culture of care?" The assistant principal looked down and said, "No," and continued, "I need to write that mother a note of apology."

Vision Defined

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines *vision* as "something seen otherwise than by ordinary sight; something beheld as in a dream." A school vision is a descriptive statement of what the school will be like at a specified time in the future. In schools where all organizational members genuinely share a vision, the vision serves as a compass, lending direction to organizational members' behavior. When the vision is the principal's, but is not embraced by organizational members, individuals may go

through the motions or act on *shoulds* rather than as a result of deep commitment. At the heart of any vision is a set of core values and beliefs. Principals new to a school sometimes experience a conflict between their own values, beliefs, and vision for the organization and the existing organizational values, beliefs, and vision. These existing beliefs and values are reflected in the culture of the organization or, as some people say, “the way we do things around here” (Peterson & Deal, 2002). These beliefs play out in individuals’ patterns of behavior, mental maps, and unwritten rules or norms for behavior. Many new principals describe what it feels like to encounter a culture where values and beliefs do not align with theirs as “being out of alignment.” A high school principal shared an example wherein his personal vision was connected with making a difference—cognitively, affectively, socially, and physically—for every student. Student success was at the heart of his vision. He entered a school where patterns of behavior and unwritten rules protected seniority in the organization as a core value. Veteran teachers were assigned advanced placement classes and the best schedules, whereas newcomers were frequently assigned struggling students with learning challenges and less desirable schedules. He reflected, “I knew I had to work hard to remove this misalignment. I knew what I encountered was what I didn’t want. But this situation made me aware that I had to come up with a detailed vision of what I wanted if I was to be successful. I had to make this picture so attractive that it would generate followers—so I wouldn’t be the only one sharing this vision!”

Multiple Visions

The situation faced by this high school principal points to the notion that there are often multiple *visions* in an organization:

- *A vision of self as a leader* entails one’s beliefs about the leadership role, how one should act, things one should and should not do, and one’s code of ethics.

- *A personal leadership vision* represents one's dreams, aspirations, and hopes for the organization and its members. It is also based on a code of ethics and deeply rooted values and beliefs about what is important.
- *A shared vision focused on teaching, learning, and assessment* engages organizational members in forming a collective vision that everyone can buy into, because it is reflective of the shared values and beliefs that place student learning at the center of all practices and actions within the schoolhouse.
- *A shared vision for the school community* embraces the notion that schools cannot operate effectively without an important partnership with the larger community. This partnership affords enriched, augmented resources for members of both school and community.

When these visions are out of alignment or not shared by all organizational members, individuals often perceive a lack of focus and the organization doesn't run smoothly. Prioritizing becomes difficult. Although visions serve to guide people and direct action, competition for attention often exists. For example, administrative newcomers in Louisville, Kentucky, put it this way, "It's hard to stay focused on your vision and take a broad view of things when immediate demands such as bursting pipes, a fight in the hallway, or a possible child abuse situation are facing you." One administrative mentor, in response to this, asked the newcomers to imagine, when competing priorities like these arise, that they are wearing bifocal contact lenses. One lens is for close vision; and the other, designed for distance. The mentor explained,

It is the nature of the principalship that, at times, you have to go back and forth between your distance and close-up lenses, and, at other times, you try to use them simultaneously. For instance, how you work with students involved in the fight in the hallway (close-up lens) might become a lesson on the value of collaboration and successful conflict resolution (distance perspective). How you work with what may turn out to be a child abuse situation (close-up lens) may be an opportunity to demonstrate a concern for the child's physical,

psychological, and emotional well-being, as well as an opportunity to build trust and become a significant positive adult connection and advocate (distance lens).

“Temptation is all around you,” one middle school principal remarked. “It may be part of my personal leadership vision that I protect valuable instructional time. Every minute counts. And then, a vision challenge emerges when a situation arises, and I find myself thinking that the simplest thing to do would be to use the intercom and interrupt classes! Having a vision for teaching and learning makes you stop and think: What is important? What is the best choice?”

Creating a Personal Leadership Vision

Roland Barth defines leadership as “making happen what you believe in” (2001, p. 446). This is accomplished through symbolic and expressive leadership behaviors. From the symbolic perspective, a principal models and focuses individual attention on what is important. From the expressive side of leadership, principals talk with teachers, help to crystallize and communicate the rationale for a vision, and generate shared discussions about what is important in the school. This focus on the meaning of a school leads to the development of a mission statement grounded in the collective beliefs of the staff. The process creates a commitment to a common direction and generates energy to pursue it. But it begins with a personal leadership vision (see Figure 1.1).

Getting clear about the answers to these questions will be reflected in how the principal interacts with others in the school and community, that is, setting priorities and making decisions. To develop a vision consistent with one’s values and beliefs, a statement of an envisioned future state is then drafted (see Figure 1.1). Going through this process develops an “inner compass” within the school leader that will point the way on the leadership path. Leaders who develop a personal vision, communicate this vision to others, and act consistently with this vision are perceived with respect and integrity, two vital ingredients for trust.

Figure 1.1

Developing a Personal Leadership Vision

Values and Beliefs

What do I deeply value?

What are my beliefs?

About leadership?

About students?

About staff members?

About community building?

About curriculum, instruction, and assessment?

About learning?

About professional development?

About supervision?

About communication?

About change?

Vision

My vision—a desired future state—entails:

Creating a Shared Vision

While a personal leadership vision is essential for the leader, members of the staff are not involved in its development. Hence, a process is needed so that the staff can articulate a shared, core ideology and an “envisioned future” for the school. Although it would take less time to copy or borrow a vision from another organization, great benefits are derived from engaging with staff in a vision-building process. It generates ownership, commitment, and energy toward making the vision become reality (see Figure 1.2, p. 9). As Stephanie Hirsh, associate executive director of the National Staff Development Council, writes:

A school vision should be a descriptive statement of what the school will be like at a specified time in the future. It uses descriptive words or phrases and sometimes pictures to illustrate what one would expect to see, hear, and experience in the school at that time. It engages all stakeholders in answering such questions as:

- What kind of school do we want for our children and staff?
- What will students learn? How will they learn?
- How will students benefit from attendance at our school?
- How will their success be measured or demonstrated?
- Of all the educational innovations and research, which strategies should we seek to employ in our school?
- If parents had a choice, on what basis would they choose to send their children to our school? (Hirsh, 1996)

There are several approaches to developing a vision. Certainly, one approach is to invite all stakeholders to come to consensus on the answers to the preceding questions. Then, a vision statement would be drafted, encapsulating their responses.

Another method of vision building involves a “Post-it strategy” (see Figure 1.3, pp. 10–11). This approach has been used successfully in schools throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, Great Britain, and Asia.

The vision derived from this process serves as a beacon, lighting the way for organizational members to collaborate on behalf of students.

Figure 1.2

Creating a Shared Vision

A shared vision considers

- Quality teaching and learning.
 - Who a school serves.
 - Characteristics of the students and their families.
 - A broad array of schoolwide data (not just test scores).
 - Current and past change efforts.
 - Desired cognitive, affective, psychological, social, and physical goals.
 - Special programs and services.
 - Hopes and aspirations.
 - Dreams for students' futures.
 - High expectations.
-

Closely related to the vision statement is the mission for the school. As Hirsh says,

A mission statement is a succinct, powerful statement on how the school will achieve its vision. The mission answers:

- What is our purpose?
- What do we care most about?
- What must we accomplish?
- What are the cornerstones of our operations? (Hirsh, 1996)

A mission statement serves as a galvanizing force for staff, students, and community. Goals identify how the mission and vision will be achieved. Some schools summarize the vision and mission in a bumper sticker to keep them in the forefront of everyone's mind. Seeing the school you want is the first step in the journey to making the vision become reality.

If the vision is truly shared, it will be evident in both the climate (how a school "feels") and the culture (how "business" is transacted) of the school.

Figure 1.3

Post-it Strategy

Materials Needed

- Chart paper
- Tape
- Markers
- Large Post-it notes
- Index cards

Steps

1. Explain what a vision statement is. For example, "A vision statement communicates what the organization stands for, what its members believe, and what ends will be accomplished in keeping with the purpose and beliefs. It serves as a galvanizing force for action."

2. Build a rationale for the vision statement. This step might include explaining why vision statements are helpful (shared sense of purpose, common direction, energizer) and examining vision statements from other organizations. During this examination, the staff could be asked to analyze the values that seem to be implicit in the vision statement. Identify how a vision statement influences a staff member's life.

3. Invite the staff to take part in the development of the vision statement. Explain that this will allow the opportunity to synthesize individual staff members' dreams or visions into a statement reached through consensus. This statement will represent the ends to which all within the organization will strive.

4. Ask staff members to think for a moment about the place where they would like to send their own very special child to school. How would the child be treated? What would his or her experiences be like? How would he or she feel? Ask staff members to describe their thoughts on Post-it notes.

5. Now ask the staff members to think about the place where they would like to go to work every day. What would it be like? How would they feel? How would people interact? Write this on Post-it notes.

6. Ask staff members to each take their two Post-it notes and fuse them into one. Tell them to write their thoughts on an index card.

(continued)

Figure 1.3

Post-it Strategy *(continued)*

7. Individuals then meet as table groups of four to six people and share their index cards. After they have all read their index cards, the table group creates a composite representing a group consensus of the individual cards. This is written with markers on chart paper.

8. Pairs of table groups meet and share their charts. They synthesize their two charts into one.

9. The groups continue the process until they create one chart that represents the shared visions of all in the room.

10. If parents and representative students have not been involved in this process, this same procedure may be repeated with them, and the products of their work brought to the faculty. At this point, the staff could incorporate these charts with the faculty work.

11. At another time, a contest could be held or the group could work together to create a slogan that would encapsulate the vision statement.

In large schools, Steps 1 through 7 might be conducted within departments. Departments would then share their completed charts and eventually synthesize their work, cross-departmentally, into one charted vision statement on which all can agree.

Source: The Principal's Companion (2nd ed.), by P. Robbins and H. Alvy, 2003. Copyright 2003 by Corwin Press. Used by permission of the authors.

**Activity**

Communicating a Personal Leadership Vision

Although it is essential that the vision of the school be a shared one among organizational members, it must also be one that is compatible with the principal's personal leadership vision. Take a moment to list or graphically depict the ways in which you communicate your personal leadership vision (e.g., writing newsletters, what you pay attention to in visiting classrooms, or prioritizing agenda items for meetings).



Reflective Field Notes

Please use this space to jot down notes that are important for your personal leadership journey. You may do this in a structured way—by responding to questions—or in an unstructured way. Use whatever approach works for you!

- How does vision serve as a compass?
- In what way might vision function as a leadership tool?
- What would you craft as a personal leadership vision?

What has influenced your thinking?

- Draft a sample vision statement for staff to analyze for core values and beliefs.
- Which approach to vision building do you prefer?
- Create a graphic organizer to encapsulate key aspects of this chapter.