Superintendent Leadership Series

Leadership Associates
2019-2020

Exceeding Expectations
For
District Leadership

Session 4 for Zoom

Success is not final, failure is not fatal; it is the courage to continue that counts.
-Winston Churchill
What questions are we trying to answer today?

In what ways do today’s expectations of the job challenge us as Superintendents? How does our current context affirm or distort those challenges? How might we inform our thinking about our responses to those expectations, especially now?

Today we will:

Use the resources of our Superintendents community to share our experiences of these current times.

Explore ways to think about current expectations that impact Superintendent effectiveness in today’s context.

Inform our thinking about our own effectiveness using current literature.

Increase our knowledge of leadership resources and tools.
Leadership Associates
Superintendent Leadership Series
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Exceeding Expectations for District Leadership
Session 4
Zoom Agenda

Welcome, Introductions, Outcomes, Essential Question, Agenda, Norms, Acknowledgement of Sponsors

Community-Building: CCC – Covid, Chat, Check-in

Circle-Back to The Year in Review: Then & Now

Focus I: Resources for Our Times
Leadership Caffeine for Leading in a Crisis
Reflection & Discussion

Focus II: Into the Book – The ONE Thing – Part 3 – Extraordinary Results
p. 132 – 134 Purpose & Productivity
Reflection & Discussion

Closing: Next Steps, Session Feedback & Suggestions for Next Year
Ordered Sharing
We are going through unprecedented times filled with unknowns at work and at home. Even so, we can accompany one another on the journey.

Please take this opportunity to consider the following four prompts. Select one and type it along with your short response to “Everyone” using the chat button on your Zoom screen.

After everyone has had a chance to respond, take a moment to look through all the responses that were submitted to add to the facilitator’s follow-up conversation with the group.

If only ...
It makes me ...
I have to ...
When all is said and done ...
Circle Back
The Year in Review: Then & Now

• How can we help each other in dealing with expectations?

• Executive wellness supports “your being the best you, so you can do your best as superintendent”.

  How are you taking care of yourself?

  What changes have you made or plan to make with your wellness planning?
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Focus I
Resources for Our Times

Leadership Caffeine for Leading in a Crisis

*It was the nation and the race dwelling all round the globe that had the lion’s heart.*
*I had the luck to be called upon to give the roar.*

-Winston Churchill
Resources for Our Times

Leadership Caffeine for Leading in a Crisis

Kites rise highest against the wind, not with the wind.
-Winston Churchill

Please take this opportunity to do a quick read of the following text:

Leadership Caffeine for Leading in a Crisis

As you read consider the following prompts:

• In what ways might this text have personal relevancy for you right now?
• Considering the eight ideas that the author presents which one or two are especially helpful?
• How might you use this text with your team right now?

Be ready to share your thinking with your colleagues.
Live and lead long enough, and at some point, you will find yourself navigating a crisis where the rulebook hasn’t been written. We’re at one of those points right now.

If you pause for a second and tune-in to your deepest emotions, they likely run the gamut of concerned, confused, uncertain, and even frightened.

Focus on those feelings for a moment, because those are precisely what your team members are feeling. These emotions are powerful for each of us, and you, as the leader, play a big part in helping ensure they don’t translate into paralysis, panic, or ugly dysfunction.

You don’t have all the answers. No one does in a crisis. However, your behaviors go a long way to gaining the collective support of your team members in pursuit of one answer and solution at a time. Put these ideas to work in pursuit of being you at your best in this challenging time.

Eight Ideas to Help You Lead in a Crisis

1. Display Calm

Panic is the enemy of productivity and progress in a crisis. Yes, you have the same unsettled feelings as everyone else, plus the added pressure that everyone is watching you. No one feels good about a boss running around with their hair on fire. Redouble your efforts to present a calm, concerned demeanor. You’ll be fighting your internal emotions, but this is one fight you have to win.
2. Exhibit Cautious Confidence

No one appreciates when the boss turns on the fake sunshine pump in a crisis. We all recognize disingenuous cheerleading and false confidence. It has the opposite of the intended effect. Instead of pumping artificial sunshine, your team members need to perceive you are confident in them and in their ability to find a way forward through the fog and create positive outcomes, one problem at a time.

3. Remain Connected

The aloof leader or the fortress leaders who lock themselves inside boardrooms during a crisis are both useless and destructive. People need to know you are engaged, involved, and connected to the situation and their efforts. Resist the temptation to hunker down and debate the future implications of this real-time crisis. Now is the time to be visible and involved.

4. Create Community Virtually

While social distancing precludes traditional approaches at gathering and working together, redouble your efforts to use the tools in front of you to keep people connected. Help people re-center by connecting with team members via video or audio and give them opportunities to share ideas, cheer about victories no matter how small, and genuinely be reminded they are a part of something bigger than themselves.

5. Over-Communicate. Daily

In times of crisis, people need to hear what’s happening, what you’re thinking, and to be given a forum to share what they are thinking. There is such a thing as too little communication, and it increases the stress-level in the workplace exponentially. Get the stress out by sharing. Make sure what you share is transparent. Don’t pull punches, but retain that cautious optimism in your tone.

6. Constantly Show You Care

In times of crisis, humans are capable of extraordinary efforts. People care and will provide super-human efforts to overcome obstacles. Tap into this by showing how much you care
for your employees, their families, and for everyone’s health and safety. Every decision and every action you take has to fall on the side of genuinely caring.

7. Challenge Yourself to Reframe Your Thinking

I’m still running into managers and firms who stubbornly resist the idea of remote work for individuals who have no real need to be locked in place. That’s a dominant logic that needs to be blown up and eliminated from the minds of these resistant managers. As for business as usual…well, nothing is as usual. Embrace it.

8. Invite Experiments—All Ideas are Welcome

A crisis where there’s no single solution demands experimentation. It’s time to live up to those words on your firm’s statement of values that says, “We encourage experimentation.” Experiments, by definition, fail, until they work. Emphasize the speed of learning and adaptation and let people run with their investigations. Redouble your efforts to create environments where they can collaborate in search of solutions.

The Bottom-Line for Now

There’s more to do than articulated here. This is a start. We’re on the brink of a new normal, possibly with this miserable virus in our lives until (hopefully) a vaccine is identified. While the near-term implications might feel crushing, it’s imperative we all stand-up and find a way through the fog together. If you have the privilege of leading, it’s time to serve and support with everything you’ve got in you. It’s time to be you at your absolute best.
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Focus II
Into the Book

The One Thing
Part 3 – Extraordinary Results
Purpose and Productivity
Focus is a matter of deciding what things you’re not going to do.
- John Carmack, Programmer, Software Designer

Please take this opportunity to read the following excerpt from the book.

Following the reading you will have an opportunity to reflect on what applying the concept in the excerpt might look like if put into action.

Be prepared to share your thinking with the group.

Part 3 – Extraordinary Results – Purpose & Productivity
p. 132 – 134
Focus II
Into the Book

The ONE Thing
The Surprisingly Simple Truth Behind Extraordinary Results
By Gary Keller with Jay Papasan
p. 132 – 134

“Even if you’re on the right track, you’ll get run over if you just sit there.
-Will Rogers

Extraordinary Results
There is a natural rhythm to our lives that becomes a simple formula for implementing the ONE Thing and achieving extraordinary results: purpose, priority, and productivity. Bound together, these three are forever connected and continually confirming each other’s existence in our lives. Their link leads to the two areas where you’ll apply the ONE Thing – one big and one small.

Your big ONE Thing is your purpose and your small ONE Thing is the priority you take action on to achieve it. The most productive people start with purpose and use it like a compass. They allow purpose to be the guiding force in determining the priority that drives their actions. This is the straightest path to extraordinary results.

Think of purpose, priority and productivity as three parts of an iceberg.

With typically only 1/9 of an iceberg above water, whatever you see is just the tip of everything that is there. This is exactly how
productivity, priority, and purpose are related. What you see is determined by what you don’t.

The more productive people are, the more purpose and priority are pushing and driving them. With the additional outcome of profit, it’s the same for business. What’s visible to the public – productivity and profit – is always buoyed by the substance that serves as the company’s foundation – purpose and priority. All businesspeople want productivity and profit, but too many fail to realize that the best path to attaining them is through purpose-driven priority.

Personal productivity is the building block of all business profit. The two are inseparable. A business can’t have unproductive people yet magically still have an immensely profitable business. Great businesses are built one productive person at a time. And not surprisingly, the most productive people receive the greatest rewards from their businesses.

Connecting purpose, priority, and productivity determines how high above the rest successful individuals and profitable businesses rise. Understanding this is at the core of producing extraordinary results.
Sharing Our Thinking

How might our thoughts about purpose in our leadership, guide our actions and decisions?

How does clarity on your purpose speak to your focus, balance and leadership at this time?
Using the Guidelines for Ordered Sharing that follow, please help to build our community by sharing your thinking on the following:

What might be some Next Steps for you from today’s Session?

In what ways did today’s Session work or not work for you?

What are your thoughts about the 2020-2021 SLS sessions – format, content, materials, timing, etc.?
Ordered Sharing Guidelines

Purpose: To invite all voices to be heard equally in a trusting and respectful way

Ask one member of the group to serve as a timer and one member to serve as a facilitator.

Any member of the group may begin by sharing their responses to the prompt.

Whenever a member of the group is sharing the group listens without interrupting, engaging in side conversations or asking questions.

Each turn to share should last approximately 2 minutes at the end of which the turn moves to the next member of the group. A member may choose to pass and should be given another opportunity to share before the round ends.

At the end of the round the group may have a conversation about what has been shared