



Professional Practices

For the 21st Century Leader

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Making PSEL Come Alive! Compasses and Cornerstones

About the Author



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PSEL Standard VII: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff reads, “Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.” I think this is **the** core value of any school and I believe it begins with the leader holding to a moral leadership compass based on acts and words matching his or her core values. Checking one’s compass regularly, and especially during tough decisions, keeps one’s integrity... a key ingredient in a professional and trusting culture.

Creating Your Inner Compass of Educational Leadership

Truth be told, I’ve been interested in leadership for a long time... what it looks and sounds like in all kinds of settings including corporate, non-profit and my comfort... public schools. My husband is a former CEO and we remark often that our visions of leadership are quite similar despite our different frames of reference. We’ve found that clarifying what we believe in about the critical aspects of our work and then identifying how others will recognize the core value in our actions is important. The two-column chart on the next page is designed to help you develop or assess your inner compass of educational leadership.

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My Compass for Educational Leadership

I deeply value...	People know this because...
I believe students...	People know this because...
I believe leadership...	People know this because...
I believe families...	People know this because...
I believe teachers...	People know this because...
I believe curriculum, instruction, and assessment...	People know this because...
I believe learning...	People know this because...
I believe supervision...	People know this because...
I believe communication...	People know this because...
I believe change...	People know this because...
I believe trust...	People know this because...

When you use the above belief statements and actions you show around those, you are now ready to craft your personal leadership vision. Go for it!

“Trust is the connective tissue that holds improving schools together.”

-Byrk and Schneider

The Cornerstones of a Positive Culture: Change, Trust, and Feedback

I am currently teaching a graduate level class on instructional leadership at Virginia Tech. One of four essential outcomes for this course is that the prospective instructional leaders demonstrate and evaluate formative and summative observations and follow-up conferences. To prepare, I backward designed by considering what they needed to know and do to be successful with evaluations and conferences. I started with a visioning exercise of what their ideal and successful school would look like and what their role would be in creating and leading such a school. This led to the creation of their personal visions of leadership where their stated values would match their outward behaviors.

We then focused on change leadership and how important understanding the principles of change is to successfully observing and conferencing with teachers. Next, I plan to have them uncover the elements of relational trust before they learn about effective and growth producing feedback. After all, it's hard, if not impossible, to help people improve, increase, or enhance their practice if you don't have knowledge of how people change and they don't trust you. Finally, after four weeks of preparation, coaching, and practice conversations, they will be ready to take a walkthrough instrument into a classroom, observe, and design feedback to deliver face-to-face. I can't wait!

Here are my teaching notes based on a seminal writing on trust in schools by Anthony Bryk and Barbara Schneider titled *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource of Improvement* as well as some tips from my Just ASK colleague, Bruce Oliver from an issue of *Just for the ASKing!* titled “It's All About Relationships.”

Relational Trust

- Is built through day-to-day social exchanges in a school community.
- Supports a moral imperative to take on the difficult work of school improvement.
- Facilitates accountability for shared standards, while also allowing people to experience autonomy and mutual support for individual efforts.
- Reduces the vulnerability that teachers feel when asked to take on tasks connected to reform.

- Facilitates the safety needed to experiment with new practices.

Critical Attributes that Build Trust

- **Respect**
Genuinely listening and valuing the opinions of others during social discourse that takes place across the school community.
- **Personal Regard for Others**
The willingness of members of a school community to extend themselves beyond what their role might formally require in any given situation. Actions are made in an effort to reduce others' sense of vulnerability.
- **Competence**
Execution of an individual's formal responsibilities. There is recognition of the interdependence of our roles in attaining the desired outcome. When negligence or incompetence is allowed to persist in any one role in the school, it undermines trust.
- **Integrity**
Consistency between what a person says and does. Others believe and perceive that a moral ethical perspective guides one's work.

Key Points from Bryk and Schneider's Research

- After researching over 400 Chicago Schools, Bryk and Schneider concluded that schools with a high degree of relational trust are far more likely to make the kinds of changes that help raise student achievement than those where relations are poor.
- The researchers looked for empirical evidence that links trust and academic achievement. The evidence from Chicago suggests that, while not all schools with high levels of trust improve (trust alone won't solve instructional or structural problems), schools with little or no relational trust have practically no chance of improving.
- Byrk and Schneider are careful to note that good relationships and trust won't compensate for bad instruction, poorly trained teachers or unworkable school structures. By the same token, reform efforts are bound to fail if they ignore the importance of how teachers, principals, parents, and students interact.



- They write, “Relational trust does not directly affect student learning. Rather, trust fosters a set of organizational conditions, some structural and others social-psychological, that make it more conducive for individuals to initiate and sustain the kinds of activities necessary to affect productivity improvements.”

In “It’s All about Relationships,” Bruce Oliver writes that:

“There is no one more powerful influence on the culture of the school than the principal. It has been cited again and again in research studies that the principal should be seen as the cohesive source of support and stability for the school. Research has

also shown that more successful principals spend more time focused on curriculum and instruction and promoting these issues through their relationships with teachers. Less successful principals concentrate their time on student discipline and managing the building. It has also been found that successful principals derive great personal satisfaction from regular contact and involvement with teachers, students, and parents on a consistent and frequent basis. In short, they are passionate in their concern for people.”

Read more from Bruce at www.justaskpublications.com/jfta/its-all-about-relationships/



Self-Assessment
Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (PSEL)
Standard 7: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff

Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.

1. Develop conditions for faculty that promote effective professional development, practice, and student learning.		My Priority
Degree to which I do this... 1 (low)...2.....3.....4.....5 (high)	Degree to which I want to know/do this better... 1 (low)...2.....3.....4.....5 (high)	
Goals, thoughts, and comments:		

2. Empower and entrust faculty with collective responsibility for meeting the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student, pursuant to the mission, vision, and core values of the school.		My Priority
Degree to which I do this... 1 (low)...2.....3.....4.....5 (high)	Degree to which I want to know/do this better... 1 (low)...2.....3.....4.....5 (high)	
Goals, thoughts, and comments:		

3. Establish and sustain a professional culture of engagement and commitment to shared vision, goals, and objectives.		My Priority
Degree to which I do this... 1 (low)...2.....3.....4.....5 (high)	Degree to which I want to know/do this better... 1 (low)...2.....3.....4.....5 (high)	
Goals, thoughts, and comments:		

4. Promote mutual accountability among faculty for each student’s success and the effectiveness of the school as a whole.		My Priority
Degree to which I do this... 1 (low)...2.....3.....4.....5 (high)	Degree to which I want to know/do this better... 1 (low)...2.....3.....4.....5 (high)	
Goals, thoughts, and comments:		

5. Develop and support open, productive, caring, and trusting working relationships among leaders and faculty to promote professional capacity and the improvement of practice.		My Priority
Degree to which I do this... 1 (low)...2.....3.....4.....5 (high)	Degree to which I want to know/do this better... 1 (low)...2.....3.....4.....5 (high)	
Goals, thoughts, and comments:		

Self-Assessment
Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (PSEL)
Standard 6: Professional Capacity of School Personnel

Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.

6. Design and implement job-embedded and other opportunities for collaborative professional learning.		My Priority
Degree to which I do this... 1 (low)...2.....3.....4.....5 (high)	Degree to which I want to know/do this better... 1 (low)...2.....3.....4.....5 (high)	
Goals, thoughts, and comments:		

7. Provide opportunities for collaborative examination of practice, collegial feedback, and collective learning.		My Priority
Degree to which I do this... 1 (low)...2.....3.....4.....5 (high)	Degree to which I want to know/do this better... 1 (low)...2.....3.....4.....5 (high)	
Goals, thoughts, and comments:		

8. Encourage faculty-initiated improvement of programs and practices.		My Priority
Degree to which I do this... 1 (low)...2.....3.....4.....5 (high)	Degree to which I want to know/do this better... 1 (low)...2.....3.....4.....5 (high)	
Goals, thoughts, and comments:		

Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015

- Mission, Vision, and Core Values
- Ethics and Professional Norms
- Equity and Cultural Responsiveness
- Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
- Community of Care and Support for Students
- Professional Capacity of School Personnel

- **Professional Community for Teachers and Staff**
Effective Educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student’s academic success and well-being

- Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community
- Operations and Management
- School Improvement

Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) Update

Virginia Tech has updated its administrative internship portfolio requirement for Masters and Specialists level students in the Graduate School of Education. The program heads embraced the **2015 PSEL** and aligned their requirements with the new standards for implementation with new students this year. The outcomes are promising and recognize the complexity of school leadership today. The standards present rich and exciting opportunities for educational leaders to innovate and inspire staff to pursue new, creative approaches for improving schools and promoting student learning.

The Board of Regents of New York State has recommended the adoption of the most current national standards for practicing educational leaders. Specifically, they have recommended the **2015 PSEL** be phased in over time with the standards going into effect in 2022 for the evaluation of principals and going into effect in 2020 for the registration of school building leader preparation programs.

Resources and References

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