



Indicator: The superintendent celebrates individual, team, and district/school successes, especially related to student learning outcomes. (5624)

Explanation: A superintendent tasked with school improvement must engage stakeholders in developing a vision and goals that will lead to substantial transformation. Effective superintendents are collaborative as they work with stakeholders to establish non-negotiable achievement and instruction goals, and closely and continuously monitor outcomes. Effective superintendents are excellent communicators, instruction-focused, visible, and committed to high expectations for all students. These superintendents share school improvement results with all stakeholders, and regularly lead and encourage celebrations of student, teacher, team, school, and district successes.

Questions: *Does the superintendent work collaboratively with stakeholders to develop non-negotiable district achievement and instructional goals? Does the superintendent model effective data analysis and continuously monitor schools' progress towards goals? Does the superintendent effectively communicate vision/goals to community stakeholders? Is the message of high expectations for all students consistently and comprehensively communicated? How does the superintendent communicate school progress to stakeholders throughout the school community, and how frequently does this communication occur? How does the superintendent and district celebrate individual, team and school/district success? Do district leaders encourage and expect principals to celebrate staff and student successes within their buildings?*

Superintendents in academically effective school systems are “active instructional managers who take seriously the coordination and control of the core learning mission of schools” (McLeod, Richardson, & Sauer, 2015, p. 105), and superintendents’ instructional leadership is key to determining a district’s academic success (Kowalski, et al., 2011; Waters & Marzano, 2006). Effective superintendents are highly supportive of school improvement and articulate and communicate to the community both a vision and a set of goals and practices that send a clear message of what district schools are to be about (SREB, 2010). In a comprehensive meta-analysis of superintendent research, Waters and Marzano (2006) found that effective superintendents targeted their efforts towards creating goal-oriented districts by assuming responsibility for the following sound practices:

- 1. Collaborative goal setting:** Effective superintendents involve all relevant stakeholders (e.g., principals, teacher-leaders, central office staff, etc.) in creating district goals.
- 2. Developing non-negotiable achievement and instruction goals:** Effective superintendents establish achievement goals for all schools and student subgroups and ensure that research-based instructional strategies are implemented to achieve these goals.
- 3. Ensuring that the school board’s goals are aligned with and support district goals:** Effective superintendents collaborate with their school boards so that board goals do not conflict with district goals and divert attention or key resources away from district goals.
- 4. Continuously monitoring progress:** Effective superintendents continually monitor progress towards targeted achievement and instruction goals.

5. Providing resources (time, money, materials, personnel, etc.): Effective superintendents make sure that resources are available to accomplish achievement and instructional goals; in some cases this involves scaling back or eliminating initiatives that are not aligned with these goals.

Superintendents that emphasize collaborative approaches and building relationships with internal and external stakeholders have been shown to be effective in promoting school improvement (Forner, Bierlein-Palmer, & Reeves, 2012; Kirtman & Fullan, 2016; Thomas, 2016). Effective superintendents also spend time ensuring that staff are focused and working towards the same direction for school improvement, and are instruction-focused by allocating significant time to stimulate, influence and support instructional practices (Kirtman & Fullan, 2016; Kowal, Hassel, & Hassel, 2009; Thomas, 2016). Superintendents also must ensure that vision and goals reflect high expectations for *all* groups of students (SREB, 2010). Research on the California Collaborative on District Reform demonstrated that dramatic changes in expectations frequently are necessary in schools where teachers and staff have become accustomed to persistent low student performance, and that these higher expectations must come from district leadership, including the superintendent and school board (Knudson, Shambaugh, & O’Day, 2011).

Effective superintendents also closely monitor learning data and progress towards achievement and instructional goals, as stated earlier. Superintendents and district leaders are then in the position to identify where school improvement is successful and use these successes to build momentum and spur progress throughout the district (Herman, et al., 2008; Public Impact, 2007). It is important that school improvement results are shared both internally and externally with the public (Hitt & Meyers, 2017). As Kowal, et al (2009) describe:

Public reporting of early results also helps build positive pressure for change and enables the entire school community to celebrate improvements when they occur. Local media coverage, high-profile school visits, district press releases, and external research about results in turnaround schools can instill urgency and drive principals and school staff to remain focused. (p. 5-6)

Celebration of these early successes with all stakehold-

ers (students, families, teachers and leaders), particularly those relating to student learning outcomes, fosters an expectation for further success and creates confidence in the competence of staff and colleagues (Kowal, et al., 2009; The Center on School Turnaround, 2017). In addition to district-wide celebration, superintendents should encourage building leaders to regularly celebrate student success. For example, principals holding weekly celebrations for students who achieve classroom stretch standards and using data walls to chart progress can reinforce both individual student and staff effort and promote a successful learning culture within the school (Robinson & Buntrock, 2011).

References and Resources

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Resources

For an example of a superintendent evaluation rubric see:
http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/model/PartIII_AppxA.pdf

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