Emerging Leadership Academy

Curriculum Outline

Session 1
Creating a Personal Leadership Platform

The foundational prerequisite for all leadership effectiveness is self knowledge. It seems that leaders who first take the time to understand themselves are better able to understand others and lead them effectively.

Know Thyself" is an ancient bit of wisdom claimed by many traditions. More recently, Daniel Goleman, in his best seller Emotional Intelligence, maintains that the first and foundational tenet of emotional intelligence is self-awareness. In his book, Frames of Mind, Howard Gardner identifies intelligence as having multiple measures including both interpersonal and intrapersonal components. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, in his book FLOW, The Psychology of Optimal Experience, shows that people with exceptional personal awareness report being much happier and satisfied with their life and work.

In this session, each participant will construct a **Personal Leadership Platform**, a self knowledge tool that organizes a leader's personal values, mission, style, personality, and experiences into a cogent expression of self that provides a foundation upon which leaders can build.

Session 2
Designing and Leading Change

One of the insightful principles from systems theory is: "Every system (school) is perfectly designed to deliver exactly the results it is now delivering." To obtain different results, a re-design of the system is necessary. Albert Einstein is credited with the quote: "The definition of insanity is doing the same things you've always done...and expecting different results." Improvement requires change. Perhaps one of the most succinct definitions of "leader" is simply "one who designs and leads change." Since most schools report they are seeking to improve current results, change is a non-option.

Why then, since the case for change is so explicit, is the actual change process so difficult for us all?   Some answers can be found in the study of human psychology. While human beings are very adept in adapting to the environment, as measured in evolutionary time, we are less adept at fast-paced, organizational change. In fact, our instincts and human nature may actually hinder our performance in these settings.

As with all humans, school leaders don't necessarily learn from experience. They learn, and improve, by reflecting upon and processing their experiences. Over time, these more contemplative leaders begin to notice meaningful patterns in the contextual field of their experiences. These patterns remain invisible to novice leaders. The contextual field is there for them as well, but it appears chaotic and devoid of meaningful pattern.

This session examines several "patterns of high performance" routinely surfaced and described by unusually successful school leaders and provides a set of user-friendly principles for applying these insights.

Session 3
Reading and Shaping School Culture

Each and every school comes equipped with a strong, existing culture. This invisible, but powerful, force is perhaps the primary determiner of success for a school's improvement efforts. It is cruelly ironic that most school leaders were selected for their positions based on their abilities to produce real, tangible results; designing a school schedule, supervising employees, enforcing school discipline, or balancing a budget. However, beginning on day one of the job as school leader, the primary factor for success is no longer tangible. It is the leader's ability to understand, assess, and positively shape the intangible, but all-powerful, force that either fuels or freezes a school's improvement efforts...school culture.

Participants in this session will: 1. Gain a clearer understanding of the nature and power of school culture by identifying, describing, and analyzing unusually powerful non-school organizational cultures. 2. Demonstrate the ability to understand, read, and assess current school or district culture by applying specific culture assessment criteria. 3. Understand the "elements" which have, over time, shaped the current school culture and design culture re-shaping strategies using these "elements of culture."

Session 4
Leading the Core Business... Teaching and Learning

One of the enduring characteristics of any successful enterprise is the ability of the organization to identify its core business and build and apply profound knowledge in its core business. Profound knowledge is the in-depth understanding of something. It is the ability to grasp the fundamental forces and principles that make something work the way it does. Successful school leaders understand that the teaching-learning process is the core business. While recognizing the impossibility of learning all there is to know about every curriculum area and every pedagogical strategy, successful school leaders are dedicated, even passionate, learners in this area. They realize that profound knowledge of the teaching – learning process is the most valuable, and perhaps the most scarce, capacity of school leadership.

The value and impact of "instructional leadership" has been long documented in the school improvement research. The title "principal," as used in early schooling, referred to the "principal teacher." Perhaps more so than in other leadership occupations, the success of school leaders is, and has always been, rooted in the profound knowledge of teaching and learning.

This session details the new knowledge and skills of instructional leadership as practiced by the most successful school leaders. Participants will

understand the link between teacher craft skill and student achievement and gain skills in observing instruction, identifying effective practice, providing feedback to teachers, and designing effective development experiences for staff.

Session 5
Building Shared Purpose and Coherent Effort

The capacity to develop personal and organizational direction is perhaps the leadership element most predictive of effectiveness and high-performance. The performance difference between schools with clear purpose and schools with "fuzzy purpose" is staggering.

"Best of Class" school organizations with clear, compelling direction are immediately identifiable by their high energy, their grace in difficult times, their ability to focus and persist, and their ability to work together.

"Typical" school organizations that suffer from some degree of "fuzzy purpose" are likewise identifiable by their chronic low energy, their pettiness and interpersonal conflict, their propensity to give up just before success is realized, and their inability to work together. It is believed that 70% of workplace conflict can be traced to unclear, uninspiring direction, rather than employees' poor interpersonal skills.

To be a part of a larger group that seeks to do great good and to understand and internalize this purpose is perhaps one of our most important human needs. Effective school leaders recognize this truth and learn to skillfully apply the tools that produce clear, compelling personal and organizational direction.

In this session, participants will develop skills in the personal and organizational application of mission, vision, goals, and core values.

Session 6
Principles and Disciplines of Life Management

Almost unanimously, school leaders agree…"I need to spend more time leading the school's core mission of teaching and learning – but my day just doesn't allow it." The daily life of a school leader is, in fact, frantic, fractured, and often crises-oriented. It's no wonder that important leadership activities often get pushed to the bottom of the to-do list.

Would it be surprising to discover that some school leaders spend up to 70% of each day engaged in proactive, high-leverage leadership activities. What's their secret? How do they get away with this? Who's tending the store and dealing with the 1,001 diversions that occur daily?

This session will examine principles from the fields of time management, life management, energy management, and decision making to detail the specific principles, disciplines, and strategies used by these unusually successful leaders.

Session 7
Building Communication, Persuasion, and Influencing Skills

Many of the most important aspects of our school and district missions require the work and wisdom of high-performance teams, teams comprised of diverse individuals with varied skill sets and bases of experience. This type of work design holds at once great promise for high-performance and great probability for misunderstanding, misconception, and unneeded conflict.

The most successful school leaders apply their skills of communicating, persuading, and influencing to the task of creating and sustaining these high-performance teams.

This program examines several strategies for building shared understanding and high-performance communication within a diverse team. Strategies such as the ladder of inference, balancing advocacy and inquiry, protocols for breaking an impasse, constructive confrontation skills, gaining multiple perspectives, scenario planning, and others require advanced understanding and skillful use, but can open the door to breakthrough results

Session 8
Ethics and Moral Leadership

It seems that Ethical and Moral leadership is getting harder and harder to find. Corporate scandals, political misdeeds, and crimes by church leaders have shaken our trust in once respected institutions. In fact, the term "moral leadership" is considered by some to be an oxymoron like jumbo shrimp or artificial intelligence.

But wait... things are not always as they seem. It turns out that ethical and moral leaders are quite plentiful and the long term performance of their companies and institutions is outstanding. We don't hear about these leaders as often as their less ethical counterparts, but they are, and always have been, plentiful, effective, and enduring.

In this session, we will examine the leadership insights and principles that guide these most ethical and moral educational leaders. Participants will gain an understanding of the three elements of ethical leadership. First... a standard to follow: Ethical and moral decisions require a set of standards outside of the self... a chosen set of values, beliefs, and commitments that exist above and apart from the current situation. Second... an internal compass: Since many ethical and moral decisions are made quickly and at the subconscious level, leaders must develop the "habit of ethics," an internal guidance system that operates without conscious attention. Third... the will to choose: Leaders must often slow down their thinking, surface their deepest motives, consider their chosen standards, contemplate the context/nuance of the situation, and make a conscious choice from among the alternatives of an ethical/moral dilemma.