

Educational Leadership Platform Paper

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Abstract

The educational leader theorist Burns first introduces us to a transformational leader in our text. The transformational leader earns the respect of the people in his/her building based on his/her values, beliefs, and vision for the future of the school. It is a leadership style that is based on influence, delegation, and most importantly, a democracy. It allows for collaboration and if successfully implemented, can create a wonderful learning experience for our students and a wonderful work environment for our employees. ISLLC standard 1 is very closely tied to Burns' theory of transformational leading. It promotes the success of students by helping the school develop an identity as collaboration, and a shared vision by all stakeholders. The importance of data is also introduced in standard 1 of the ISLLC standards. If collected and used properly, data is quite convincing, and almost impossible to refute. Standard 1 also states the importance of creating plans to achieve goals. It is extremely important to keep working towards goals to better the learning experience in your building, it is equally important to keep changing these plans if needed so that you may ultimately achieve your goals. Standard 4 of the ISLLC standards talks of how important it is that a leader promotes success of every student by encouraging collaboration with faculty, students, and community. Foster believes in four basic characteristics that make up a successful transformational leader; being educative, critical, ethical, and transformative. I believe these four characteristics is essential to being a good leader. I want to be a leader who inspires teachers and students to be better through critical, ethical, and educative thinking. Establishing a great learning and working environment where students and teachers enjoy themselves and are successful is my ultimate goal as a future building leader.

To me, creating an “educational leadership platform paper” is an opportunity to do some deep-thinking into what kind of an educator I really am. I think that far too often, we as educators get comfortable in our positions in education and we don’t take the time to think about what is important to us as professionals, and we don’t allow ourselves to ask how we can get better at our jobs. These are important factors to consider when creating a paper such as this. These are important because they make us more efficient in our jobs, and in turn, they benefit our students by creating a better learning environment. The most important part to remember when writing this paper is that the students matter the most. We get caught up in our day-to-day jobs and responsibilities, and sometimes we forget the most important part of what we do; educate our students. There is much to consider, contemplate, and worry about when working in a school district, it is important to always put those thoughts and concerns second to our students, who are our future.

When asked to think about a leadership theorist I instantly remembered Burns from the Ubben text. The first chapter of our book has really stuck with me throughout this class and has helped me to consider what kind of leader I want to be. The talk of a transactional and transformational leader is an important part to me when I consider my philosophy of being a building leader. Burns states; “The transactional leader operates from a power base of rewards and punishments and endeavors to gain the cooperation of followers on an “exchange” basis. Little personal commitment results from this exchange, because it depends on merely understanding the duties and making sure they are accomplished as directed” (Ubben, Hughes, Norris, 2011, pp10). Although this was the first thing I learned while learning to be a building leader, this is the first thing that I adamantly disagreed with. I don’t want to be respected as a leader in my building

because people are afraid of what I will do if they don't do what I want them to. I want to earn the respect of the people that work for me because they value my beliefs and my ideas and they buy into my vision for our school. To me, the "transactional leader" sounded more of a dictator than a leader, and I did not want any part of that. A transformational leader sounds more like the kind of leader that I want to be. This is a leader who inspires people by collaboration as "they work toward a purpose to which they are deeply committed. It is a leadership style based on influence and is accomplished when leaders delegate and surrender power over people and events in order to achieve power over accomplishments and goal achievement" (Ubben, Hughes, Norris, 2011, pp10). This is how I see myself running a building. Gaining the respect of the building, getting them to buy into my vision for our school, and using these people to collaborate and work together towards a common goal is how I see my school becoming successful. I believe that people are much more cooperative and open to change when you include them in decision making; making them feel important and valued is just as important as getting that end-result of what you want changed. When people feel valued and appreciated they will work hard towards a common goal and they gain a sense of pride in what they are doing; thus benefitting your school, and ultimately your students which is the ultimate goal of any change or implementation in any school. When developing a vision of a school and working towards change, it is paramount to consider how this benefits the students of your school. If these goals and changes are not made to enhance your student's education, then these are not goals and changes that you want to implement in your school.

The interstate school leader's licensure consortium standards (ISLLC) were formed to develop standards and assessments for school leaders. I think that standard 1 is very important when considering what kind of building leader I want to be. This standard ties very closely to Burns' theory of transformational not transactional leading. This standard "promotes the success of every student by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders" (ISLLC Standards, 2010, pp2). This standard speaks for itself when considering my goals and vision for a school that I would like to lead. The first part of this standard states that the leader collaboratively develop and implement a shared vision and mission, which is exactly what I was previously talking about with gaining respect by getting buy in with similar goals and values. Working towards change or bettering the learning experience, which is what we should always be doing when working in a school, will happen when everyone in the building gets on the same page, buys into your vision for the school, and then collaborates with everyone towards that SHARED vision and goal for the school. Function B states the importance of collecting data to identify goals and evaluate how successful things are in a school. This is extremely important when trying to implement change in a building. As a new leader in a building I believe that it is important to back up what you believe with statistics and solid proof for those you are presenting the information to. This is another way to promote collaboration and positive change through the use of statistical proof. It's pretty hard to refute the need for change in certain areas of your building when you're providing concrete evidence for an existing need. Function C of standard 1 states the importance of creating plans to achieve goals. I believe in any school it is extremely important to have

a plan. Having a plan helps to achieve your goals. Developing both short-term and long-term goals are extremely important when talking about goals and objectives. Using the districts plan is a good way to develop goals of your own in a building you lead. The establishment of these plans by school districts provides clear goals for you to achieve as a building leader. Functions D and E under standard 1 are about promoting continuous improvement and revising plans in order to be a successful administrator. To me this is an extremely important function in the ISLLC standards. Constantly self-evaluating as well as evaluating our schools as a whole is essential to keeping continuous growth and improvement throughout a learning environment. Making progress towards goals is dependent on constant evaluation. This evaluation will lead to positive growth and the eventual attainment of one's goals.

Standard 4 of the ISLLC standards states; "An education leader promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources". This standard has four functions; collect and analyze data and information pertinent to the educational environment, promote understanding, appreciation, and use of the community's diverse cultural, social and intellectual resources, build and sustain positive relationships with families and caregivers, and build and sustain productive relationships with community partners. Enough cannot be said about the positive effects of a good relationship between the school and the community. I have seen it time and time again in the school I work in, getting the parents and community members to buy-in to your vision and dream of your school is essential in getting the students of your school to be successful members of your scholastic community. Maintaining positive

relationships with parents will allow for the parents to respect you as an administrator and in turn they will respect the building that their child goes to school at. Parents that have open lines of communication with administrators often times see better and quicker results, the same goes vice-versa. Understanding the importance of the community's diversity is essential in being a positive role in each student's academic career. Building positive and productive relationships with the community is equally as important. Allowing for the community to be an integral part of the school's day can benefit a district immensely. The more you get the students interested in the community and make those connections of community to student, the more likely the student is to be a successful part of the community. Building these relationships benefits the student as well as the community and it turn create a positive environment to live and work in.

The educational theorist Foster has a very interesting opinion on transformational leaders in which I really believe helps a building leader to be very successful in his/her career. Foster believes in four characteristics that make up a successful transformational leader. Surprisingly the first characteristic Foster talks about is the ability of leaders to help the organization learn. The transformational leader needs to be able to understand the history of the school, what values there are in this community, and how power has been distributed throughout the school in the past. Foster also says that transformational leaders are critical. "They help organizational members examine current conditions and question their appropriateness for all individuals. They encourage individuals to make a difference in the situations that seem unjust or inappropriate by taking action in positive ways" (Ubben, Hughes, Norris, 2010, pp11). This is an extremely important way to approach positive change as a new building principal. Foster also says that a good

transformational leader is ethical. “They encourage self-reflection, democratic values, and moral relationships” (Ubben, Hughes, Norris, 2010, pp11). Again, this is the way to gain the respect and thus cooperation of a new staff as a building leader. If the staff is constantly looking at themselves and how they can get better, they will always be improving themselves and the ways that they approach their job. By supporting democratic values a building leader, an administrator is inviting staff members to give their opinion and ideas. This helps to gain respect of the staff and also gives them a sense of self-worth and importance. This helps for the climate of the school, and a very positive school climate ultimately results in positive student achievement and growth. Finally, Foster says that transformational leaders are “transformative”. “Their Leadership is aimed towards social change through elevation of human consciousness. They seek to build a community of individuals who believe they can make a difference” (Ubben, Hughes, Norris, 2010, pp11). This is possibly the most important part of becoming a transformational leader. If you can establish a community of teachers who “Believe” they can make a positive difference, then they will. Of course, this is our ultimate goal as administrators; creating a positive community of teachers who have a great impact on the lives of their students while improving their educational experience.

I hope that when I become a building administrator, I am able to be a transformational leader. I want to be a leader who inspires teachers and students to be better than they are through critical, ethical, and educative thinking. Establishing a positive learning environment in which teachers and students enjoy themselves, as well as teach and learn is my ultimate goal as a future building leader.

Bibliography

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