

Minnesota Principals Academy - Action Learning Project
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Creating a Vision for a Secondary School

Abstract

This Action Learning Project involved developing a shared vision for a seventh through twelfth grade secondary building. The project is the process I used to gather input, engage stakeholders, create a vision, and begin to align the many aspects of the school to that vision. The basis of this project was born out of necessity. Setting a vision reset the focus of a historically scattered school faculty. Kouzes and Posner state in *A Leader's Legacy*, "If you are going to stir the soul of your constituents, if you are going to lift them to a higher level of performance, then this is what you need to know, it is not the leader's vision, it's the people's vision that matters most." Through gathering input from the stakeholders, guiding them through creating a vision and mission, and finally agreeing on that vision, the faculty shared a common purpose. The process started and ended during the spring semester of the 2015-2016 school year. The evaluation was quantitative and primarily used interview data.

The evaluation shows that all stakeholders felt as if they had input and that the process led to the development of a vision and mission which focused our work to prepare students to be college and career ready while providing them a safe and supportive learning environment.

Vision: Develop a shared vision for a seventh through twelfth grade secondary school

Background/Context: I am a fourth year principal in a building in which three of the previous four principals were internal hires, leading the building over twelve of the thirteen previous school years. Not only were those principals hired from within, but all four them, including me, were new principals. The void in consistent leadership created a building where leadership roles were filled by many different teachers whose values did not align. We needed to refocus, realign, and get moving in a common direction.

Program rationale: The development of the vision for the faculty at this high school was as important to having a vision and mission in the end. For any real change that comes from having a vision and mission, creating a vision and a mission that is created by the stakeholders ensures that it is everyone's goal.

What we did: We worked through a program review, educated ourselves through literature review and reflection allowing for a common language, and engaged in the vision and mission development

What we found out: I learned that engaging the stakeholders in the vision and mission development process is as important in focusing those stakeholders on the final vision and mission. Reviewing the programs strengthened the programs as all people at the table saw how all that we do is an important part of our students' readiness.

Implications for practice:

1. Going through a program review allows for everyone see all that we do and allows for elimination or bolstering of some programs.
2. Engaging stakeholders creates a sense of ownership.
3. Develop a new vision and mission.
4. Allows leaders to be strategical
5. Evaluation plan - How will we know we are aligned to the vision and mission.