

SREB Leadership Curriculum Modules:

Engaging Leaders in Solving Real School Problems

Every school has leadership that results in improved student performance — and leadership begins with an effective school principal.

Challenge to Lead Goals for Education

The SREB Leadership Curriculum Modules are changing the way school leaders are trained by guiding the redesign of preparation programs and professional development. The modules bring focus to what principals and school leadership teams must know and be able to do to improve instruction and raise student achievement. Together, they form a coherent curriculum and provide a starting point for creating a program that emphasizes instructional leadership and problem-based learning.

The framework for the modules is the set of 13 Critical Success Factors identified in SREB studies of principals recognized for school and classroom practices that increase student achievement. The modules build upon one another so participants become increasingly better equipped to use practices effectively.

The SREB Critical Success Factors

1. **Focusing on student achievement:** creating a focused mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of school, curriculum and instructional practices that make higher achievement possible.
2. **Developing a culture of high expectations:** setting high expectations for all students to learn higher-level content.
3. **Designing a standards-based instructional system:** recognizing and encouraging good instructional practices that motivate students and increase their achievement.
4. **Creating a caring environment:** developing a school organization where faculty and staff understand that every student counts and where every student has the support of a caring adult.
5. **Implementing data-based improvement:** using data to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices and in student achievement.
6. **Communicating:** keeping everyone informed and focused on student achievement.
7. **Involving parents:** making parents partners in students' education and creating a structure for parent and educator collaboration.
8. **Initiating and managing change:** understanding the change process and using leadership and facilitation skills to manage it effectively.
9. **Providing professional development:** understanding how adults learn and advancing meaningful change through quality sustained professional development that leads to increased student achievement.
10. **Innovating:** using and organizing time and resources in innovative ways to meet the goals and objectives of school improvement.
11. **Maximizing resources:** acquiring and using resources wisely.
12. **Building external support:** obtaining support from the central office and from community and parent leaders for the school improvement agenda.
13. **Staying abreast of effective practices:** continuously learning from and seeking out colleagues who keep them abreast of new research and proven practices.

How to Use the Leadership Curriculum Modules

The modules are available to universities, state leadership academies and other not-for-profit entities providing preparation or professional development for school leaders. University faculty can use the modules as the foundation for a redesigned curriculum. In schools, districts and state academies, teams of teachers and administrators can be trained together to implement effective improvement plans.

Participants are encouraged to begin with the foundational modules to form a base of knowledge and skills on which subsequent modules can build. These modules are identified with a † symbol.

SREB Leadership Curriculum Module Descriptions

IMPROVING THE SCHOOL AS A SYSTEM

Audience: Aspiring Leaders and School Leadership Teams

*** † *Using Data to Focus Improvement***

Schools that successfully improve student achievement use data regularly to guide decisions about instruction, student support and professional development. Easy-to-use processes are taught, and participants learn how data are vital to the school improvement process.

*** † *Creating a High-Performance Learning Culture***

Schools cannot improve when the culture does not support improvement. In the push to improve quickly, the school's culture often is forgotten. Participants learn what culture is and why it must be cultivated; what roles leaders play in growing the culture; and what tools and strategies are available to help leaders foster a culture that supports improvement, high expectations and student well-being.

*** *Using Root Cause Analysis to Reduce Student Failure***

Improving student learning by changing school and classroom practices both requires and results in changes to a school's culture. Culture also impacts how and what improvements are made to benefit student learning. Data can be a powerful lever to explore inequities, expose systemic biases, and change beliefs and practices needed to improve the achievement of disenfranchised students. Participants gain analytical tools to uncover the real problems that school leaders need to address to close achievement gaps in schools.

Providing Focused and Sustained Professional Development

Professional development is a powerful tool for changing schools, yet frequently is done poorly and results in little or no positive change. Participants examine the characteristics of professional development in high- and low-performing schools, learn how to structure successful learning for the staff and learn how schools can create a professional learning community.

Organizing Resources for a Learning-Centered School

How can schools more effectively use time and resources for teaching, planning and professional learning? This module adds practical tools and processes to the leadership toolbox, including how the school staff can work together to improve achievement and how it can use technology in instruction.

Communicating to Engage Stakeholders in School Improvement

Effective communication is key to improving the school community. Often the best intentions are side-tracked by poor communication. Participants learn how to communicate effectively, decide who needs to know what and why, involve people at the right times and measure the impact of communication has on schools and quality instruction.

Leading School Change to Improve Student Achievement

School leaders have become accustomed to the idea that "the only constant is change." Productive school leaders understand the forces that influence the change process and can direct these forces for continuous school improvement. Participants learn how to lead rather than react to change.

Coaching for School Improvement

Schools undergoing transformational school improvement processes often need external coaches to help them through the processes. Participants learn how to add value to various school improvement situations by using a variety of strategies and techniques.

Building Instructional Teams That Make a Difference

The heart of leadership is the willingness to assume responsibility. Schools that make and sustain improvement use teams to lead school reform. Effective teams understand the forces that influence the change process and can direct these forces for continuous school improvement. Participants learn how to lead change, collaborate and distribute leadership, and design and organize teams to improve student achievement.

* *Using Data to Focus Improvement and Creating a High-Performance Learning Culture are recommended prerequisites for Using Root Cause Analysis to Reduce Student Failure.*

IMPROVING CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Audience: Aspiring Leaders and School Leadership Teams

† *Prioritizing, Mapping and Monitoring the Curriculum*

In a world of high-stakes testing, this module helps schools keep the curriculum on target. Participants learn the benefits of prioritizing, mapping and monitoring the curriculum and gain a deeper understanding of what they want students to learn, which learning is most important and how to know if the curriculum is being taught.

† *Designing Assessment Systems to Improve Student Learning*

Participants learn to link curriculum, assessment and instruction; use assessment to improve learning; recognize good instruction; and use effective, research-based instructional strategies, tools and processes to observe and study assessment and instruction.

† *Aligning Teacher Assignments and Student Work to Rigorous Standards*

Schools may adopt standards that ask students to learn at high levels, but classroom assignments often do not match the standards. Participants learn a process to analyze teacher assignments and student work to determine if the assignments really require students to complete high quality work that helps them meet standards.

Personalizing School to Engage Students in Learning

When standards are raised, extra help is necessary for students to achieve at higher levels. Participants learn how to make schools learner-friendly using effective extra help programs, successful transition programs and meaningful advisement that includes parents.

Leading Schoolwide Literacy Initiatives

Literacy is a national problem that has become a top education priority for the federal government and educators across the nation. School leaders must be able to recognize effective literacy instruction and observe and meet with teachers about good literacy practices. Students need a complete set of complex reading, writing and language skills to handle a variety of texts in school and beyond. This module helps participants learn how to effectively lead school literacy efforts.

Leading Schoolwide Numeracy Initiatives

Getting and keeping a good job in today's economy require an ever-increasing breadth and depth of mathematical skills and concepts. School leaders must know how to recognize effective numeracy instruction and encourage it across the curriculum. This module helps participants provide schoolwide numeracy leadership.

Assessing Academic Rigor to Ensure Grade-Level Proficiency and College Readiness

Although school leaders generally recognize the importance of rigor, many are not thoroughly and accurately measuring, monitoring and encouraging it. Too often, rigor is a vague concept that means instruction is hard, tough and sometimes boring. In this module, school leaders learn how to use tools and strategies to determine whether rigor exists in the school.

IMPROVING LEADERSHIP PREPARATION

Audience: University-District Teams

Developing Internship Programs for School Leaders: A How-To Guide for University and School District Partners

Internship programs that allow aspiring principals to practice the leadership behaviors linked to higher student achievement are essential elements of quality principal preparation programs. Participants work in university district partnerships to create partnership agreements and develop high-quality internship programs.

Mentoring School Leaders in Competency-Based Internships

This program builds the skills of administrators who are serving as mentors to aspiring principals. Participants learn the roles, skills, processes and tools used by effective mentors to help develop school leaders who can make a difference in student achievement.

Developing Collaborative University-District Partnerships to Prepare Learning-Centered Principals

University-district partnerships have the potential to leverage the collective capacity of both organizations, if both are willing and able to work together to develop and maintain — within a formal structure — a shared vision, a shared sense of urgency, mutual accountability and shared inquiry. This training guides partnerships and accelerates their progress as they develop enabling conditions to design and implement a new paradigm of school leadership.

The Spring 2009 SREB Leadership Curriculum Module Instructor Training

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