Fostering Leadership Capacity in Three South Carolina High Schools: An Exploratory Study

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ABSTRACT

Some states include fostering leadership in principal evaluations, so principals need to provide opportunities for their staffs to assume leadership roles. Yet, less is known about the specific ways principals prepare their staffs to assume leadership roles. In this exploratory study we examined how principals in three South Carolina high schools intentionally distributed leadership capacities of others. In this study, leadership capacity structures of three principals were examined to determine how they identified potential leaders and supported leadership development. In this study, we report on how principals intentionally supported leaders through: 1) creating opportunities for leaders to work hard in their previous role, 2) matching opportunities to leaders' skills, 3) scaffolding opportunities to lead, 4) leaders showing enthusiasm and care for students, 5) leaders having good interpersonal skills, 6) leaders having good intercultural skills, 7) leaders having good leadership qualities, 8) leaders having good problem-solving skills, and 9) leaders having good decision-making skills.

STUDY PARTICIPANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kuranda High School</th>
<th>Haymont High School</th>
<th>Gantt Circle High School</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1500 students; 92% white; 6% Black; 2% Hispanic</td>
<td>1650 students; 64% white; 34% Black</td>
<td>1550 students; 65% white, 22% black, 10% Hispanic, 3% Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Moore (Principal)</td>
<td>Nancy Jones (Principal)</td>
<td>Mason King (Principal)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emily Harris (AP- Freshmen Academy Director)</td>
<td>Diane Lewis (Freshmen Academy Director)</td>
<td>Cole Hunt (athletic director)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony Taylor (AP)</td>
<td>Jill Smith (Graduation Coach)</td>
<td>Amy West (English Tchr/Student Council Advisor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Kelly (AP)</td>
<td>Brad Evans (Academic Coach)</td>
<td>Rachel Carter (Science Tchr/Science Dept. Chair)</td>
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INTRODUCTION

Distributed Leadership
- Sharing leadership activity
- Also called participative, collaborative and democratic leadership
- Principals build capacity

Building capacity
- Influences student achievement
- Leads to organizational change
- Successful if thoughtful and purposeful

Previous Studies
- Distributed leadership and built department chairs' capacities (grant-funded) (Klar, 2012)
- Leadership distributed to teachers who sought new roles– needs to be clearly defined (Margolis & Huggins, 2011)

CONCLUSIONS

How leaders were identified:
1. Leaders indicated a desire to go into a formal leadership role
2. Leaders had good inter- and intra-personal skills and rapport with students and parents
3. Leaders demonstrated persistence and willingness to work hard in their previous role
4. Leaders were effective teachers
5. Leaders showed enthusiasm and care for students
6. Leaders had a particular knowledge or skill

How principals intentionally supported leaders
1. Mentored or coached others to leadership
2. Scaffolded opportunities to lead
3. Trusted leaders to make the right decisions
4. Allowed leaders to make mistakes
5. Matched opportunities to leader's skills, knowledge and dispositions

SELECED REFERENCES