Educational Traits and leadership: Influences on Student Learning

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Taking Stock in Training Leaders:
How Does It Matter Anyway?

Effective teaching, leadership makes a Difference in improving learning.There's nothing particularly novel in all this Controversial about that idea.What? Far less clear, even after several decades of school renewal efforts, is just how Leadership matters, how important those Effects are in promoting the learning of all children, and what the essential ingredients of successful leadership are.Lacking solid evidence to answer these Questions, those who have sought to make the case for greater attention and Invest in leadership as a footpath For large-scale education improvementhave had to rely more on faith than fact.This reportexamines the available evidence andoffers educators, policymakers and allCitizens interested in promotingsuccessful schools, some answers to thesevitally important questions. It works out that leadership not only matters: it is second only to teaching among school-associated ingredients in its impact on student learning, granting to the evidence compiled and analyzed by the generators.

How Do High-Quality Leaders Achieve This Impact?

By setting directions – charting a clear path that everyone understands, establishing high expectations and applying data to track progress and public presentation.By getting people – offering teachers and others in the organization with the necessary documentation and preparation to win.And by creating the organization workensuring that the entire scope of conditions and incentives in districts and schools fully supports rather than Inhibits teaching and learning. There is however a lot more to discover about the requisites of character leadership. To harness its benefits, and how to ensure that we don't continue to throw good leaders into bad systems that will grind down even the best of them. I'm confident that the knowledge in this report, and subsequent publications by this team of researchers, will help lead to more effective policy and practice at a time of fully justified public impatience for school improvement.

How Leadership Influences Student Learning?

All current school reform efforts aim to improve teaching and learning. Simply in that respect are vast conflicts in how they proceed around it.Some reforms, for instance, attempt to improve all schools in a district, state or country at the same time.Other reforms attempt to determine the overall access to instruction and scholarship within a school, but do so one school at a time.Yet others, focused on innovative curricula (in science and mathematics, for example), typically address one portion of a school's plan and aim for widespread implementation, While innovative approaches to education, such as cooperative learning, hope to change teachers' practices one teacher at a time. As dissimilar as these approaches to school reform are, even then, they all depend for their success on the motivations and capacities of local leadership.The probability of any reform, improving student learning is remote unless district and school leaders agree with its designs and appreciate what is commanded to make it run.Local leaders must also, for instance, be able to help their colleagues understand how the externally-initiated reform might be incorporated into local improvement efforts, offer the necessary supports for those whose practices must change and must gain the cooperation and backing of parents and others in the local community.So "effective" or "successful" leaders is vital to school reform.This is why we need to recognize what it looks like and understand a great deal more about how it goes.As the first footfall in a major research project targeted at further building the knowledge base about effective educational leaders, we reviewed available evidence in response to five inquiries:

- What effects does successful leadership have on pupil scholarship?
- How should the competing strains of leadership visible in the literature be? Settled?
- Is there a usual circle of "basic" leadership practices used by successful leaders? In most conditions?
- What else, beyond the bedrock, is wanted for successful leaders?
- How does successful leadership exercise its influence on the learning of pupils?

Leadership Effects on Pupil Learning

Our inspection of the evidence suggests that successful leadership can play a highly significant – and frequently underestimated – role in improving pupil learning.Specifically, the available evidence about the size and nature of the effects of successful leadership on student learning justifies two important titles:

1. Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related ingredients that contribute to

What should students be learning in school?While evidence about leadership effects on student learning can be perplexing to interpret, much of the existing research actually underestimates its effects. The total (direct and indirect) effects of leadership on student learning account for around a fourth of total school effects.This evidence supports the present widespread interest in improving leadership as a key to the successful execution of large-scale reform.

2. Leadership effects are usually largest where and when they are needed most. Especially when we think of leaders in formal administrative roles, the greater the challenge the greater the impact of their actions on learning. While the evidence shows small but substantial effects of leadership actions on student learning across the spectrum of schools, existing research also shows that exhibited the effects of successful leaders are considerably larger in schools that are in more difficult conditions.Indeed, there are almost no documented cases of troubled schools being turned around without interference by a powerful leader.Many other genes may lead to such turnarounds, but leadership is the catalyst.These outcomes, therefore, point to the value of altering, or adding to, the leadership capacities of underperforming schools as part of their improvement efforts or as voice of school reconstitution.

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Measuring the effects of schooling.

Leadership Effects on Pupil Learning

Leaders:
Forms and Fads

When we guess about "successful" leadership, it is easy to get befuddled by the current evidence about what that actually entails.Three finishes are warranted around the different phases of leadership reflected in that literature.

1. Many labels used in the literature to signify different kinds or modes of leadership mask the generic Identify and analyze the functions of leadership.Unlike kinds of leadership are identified in the literature using adjectives such

As "instructional," "participative," "popular," "transformational," "moral," "strategic" and the likes.But these labels primarily capture different stylistic or methodological approaches to attaining the same two essential objectives, critical to any organization's effectiveness: helping the organization set a defensible Lay out of directions and influencing members to go in those charges. Leadership is both this simple and this complex. "Instructional leadership," for example, encourages a focus on improving the classroom practices of teachers as the direction for the shoal."Transformational leadership," on the other hand, draws attention to a broader array of school and classroom conditions that may need to be changed if learning is to meliorate. Both

"Democratic" and "participative leadership" are particularly touched with how decisions are worked about both school priorities and how to follow them.The moral here is that we necessitate to be questioning about the "leadership by adjective" literature.Sometimes these adjectives have real substance, but sometimes they disguise the more important underlying themes common to successful leadership, regardless of the style being advocated.

2. Head teachers, superintendents and teachers are all being admonished to be "instructional leadership" without Much clarity about what that entails.The term "instructional leader" has been in vogue for decades as the desired model for training leaders – principals especially.However the condition is often more a slogan than a clear set of leadership exercises.While it certainly communicates the importance of keeping teaching and finding out at the forefront of decision making, it is no more meaningful, in and of itself, then admonishing the oleander of any organization to sustain his or her eye along the organizational "ball" – in this instance, the core aim of making schools work better for children.Sloganistic uses of the term "instructional leadership" even so, there are several quite well-developed models carrying the championship of "instructional leaders" that do specify particular leadership practices and offer evidence of the impingement of these patterns on both systems and scholars.Hollinger'smodel v has been the most researched; it consists of three sets of leadership dimensions (Defining the School's Mission, Managing the Instructional Program and Promoting a Positive Learning Climate), within which are 10 specific leadership practices. Both Dukevi and Andrews and Soddervii provide other well-developed but less-researched examples of instructional leaders.Displacing the sloganistic uses of the term "instructional leaders" with

the more precise leadership practices specified by well-developed leadership models are much to be trusted.

3. "Distributed leadership" is in peril of becoming no more than a slogan unless it is made more thorough And thoughtful consideration. Equally it is oftentimes employed in the field and in education leadership research dating back nearly 70 years, the ideas underlying the term "distributed leadership" have mainly commonsense meanings and connotations that are not challenged.Neither superintendents nor principals can get along the whole leadership task by themselves. Successful leaders develop and count on contributions from many others in there systems. Principals typically count on key teachers for such leadership, along with their local administrative colleagues. In site-based management contexts, parent leaders are frequently essential to the school's success.Superintendents rely for leadership on many central-office and school-based citizenry, along withElected board members. Effective school and district leaders make savvy use of outside help to enhance their influence. While many in the education field uses the term "distributed leadership" reverentially,

On that point is substantial overlap with such other well-developed, longstanding conceptions of leadership as "shared," "collaborative," "democratic" and "participative."Furthermore, when regarded in terms of the definition of leadership suggested here, practical applications of leadership distribution may easily get confused with the mere distribution of management duties.Promising efforts have lately led off to offer the concept of distributed leadership beyond its common sense habits and supply evidence about its nature and effects (e.g.,Groan, 2002; Spillane, in press; Leithwood et al, 2004). These efforts suggest, for instance, that it is helpful for some leadership functions to be performed at every stage in the system; for example, stimulating people

To believe differently about their workplace.On the other hand, it is significant for other purposes to be carried away at a picky point.For instance, it seems vital that leadership in conventional positions of authority retain responsibility for establishing a shared vision for their establishments.As well, it seems likely that different forms of leadership distribution throughout districts and schools, for instance, might be connected with different tiers of effects on students.This is a bright line of research that may prevent distributed leadership from becoming just.

Some other "leadership flavor of the month."Caved in the body politic of our understanding about distributed leadership, therefore, policy makers and leadership developers would serve well to take a more

cautious attitude toward the concept until more evidence is developed to move the term beyond the obvious and provide a cleaner apprehension of its actual impact on schools and students.The fundamentals of successful leadership In organizational sectors as different as schools and the military, and in national cultures as different as The Netherlands, Canada, Hong Kong and the United States, there is compelling evidence of a common core of practices that anythe successful leader calls on, as required.Many of these patterns are common to different examples of leadership, as well.These patterns can be conceived of as the "basics" of successful leaders.Seldom are such practices sufficient for leaders aiming to significantly improve pupil learning in their shoals. But without them, not much would happen. Three lots of practices make up this basic core of successful leadership practices:

Setting directions, training people and redesigning the organization.

1. Setting Directions

Evidence suggests that those leadership practices included in Setting Directions account for the largest proportion of a leader's impact. This set of practices is directed at helping one's colleagues develop shared understandings about the system and its actions and ends that can under gird a sense of determination or imagination.People are motivated by goals which they find personally compelling, as well as challenging but doable.Taking in such goals helps people make sense of their workplace and enables them to get a sense of identity for themselves within their workplace setting.Frequently mentioned as helping lay out directions are such specific leadership practices as identifying and articulating a vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals and making high performance expectations.Monitoring organizational performance and encouraging effective communication throughout the organization also assists in the development of shared organizational purposes.

2. Growing People

Evidencegathered in both school and non-school organizations about the contribution of this set of practices to leaders' effects is significant.While clean and compelling organizational directions contribute significantly to members' work-related motivations, they are not the only conditions to act thus.Nor do such directions contribute to the capacities, members often need in order to productively move in those charges.Such capacities and motivations are influenced by the direct experiences, organizational members have with those in leadership roles, as easily as the organizational context within which people operate.

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The Fundamentals of Successful Leaders

More-specific sets of leadership practices significantly and positively influencing these direct experiences include, for example: offering intellectual stimulation, providing individualized support and providing appropriate examples of best practice and beliefs considered fundamental to the system.

3. Redesigning the Organization

The contribution of schools to student learning most certainly depends on the motivations and capacities of teachers and administrators, acting both individually and collectively. But organizational conditions sometimes blunt or wear down educators' good intentions and actually prevent the exercise of effective exercises.In some settings, for example, high-stakes testing has encouraged a drill-and-practice kind of teaching among teachers who are absolutely capable of building up a deep understanding on the constituent of their pupils.And extrinsic financial incentives for achieving school performance targets, under some conditions, can erode teachers' intrinsic commitments to the benefit of their pupils.Successful educational leaders develop their districts and schools as effective organizations that endorse and maintain the performance of administrators and teachers, as well as scholars. Specific practices typically associated with this set of basics include strengthening district and school cultures, modifying organizational structures and building collaborative processes. Such practices must be avoided presume that the intent behind the redesign of organizational cultures and structures is to facilitate the study of organizational members and that the malleability of structures should match the shifting nature of the school's improvement agenda.

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Beyond The Fundamentals of Successful Leaders:

Sufficient understanding of the context

Like experts in most studies, successful leaders have overcome not just "the basics," but also productive responses to the singular demands of the contexts in which they recover themselves.In this sense, all successful leadership is "contingent" at its sources. Indeed, impressive evidence suggests that individual leader actually
Behave quite differently (and productively) depending on the circumstances they are facing and the multitude with whom they are playing.This calls into doubt the common belief in habitual leadership "styles" and the hunt for a single best model or trend.We necessitate to be building up leadership with large repertoires of practices and the capacity to choose from that repertoire as needed, not leaders trained in the rescue of one "ideal" set of patterns.
We think this evidence argues for further research aimed less at the development of particular leadership models and more at discovering how such flexibility is exercised by those in various leadership roles.

1. Organizational Context

There is a rich body of evidence about the relevance to leaders of such features of the organizational context as geographic location (urban, suburban, rural), level of schooling (elementary, secondary) and both school and district size. Each of these characteristics has important implications for what it intends to offer successful leadership.For instance, successful principals in inner-city schools often see it necessary to engage in more direct and top-down forms of leadership than do successful principals in suburban contexts. The curricular knowledge of successful elementary principals frequently reveals the curricular knowledge of their teachers; in contrast, secondary principals will typically rely on their department heads for such knowledge. Likewise, small schools allow for quite direct engagement of leadership in modeling desirable forms of teaching and monitoring the practices of teachers, whereas equally successful leaders of large schools typically influence their teachers in more indirect ways; for instance, through planned professional development experiences.This evidence challenges the wisdom of leadership development initiatives that try to be all things to all leaders or refuse to recognize differences in leadership practices required by differences in organizational context.Being the center of attention head of a large secondary school, for instance, really does require quite different capacities than being the head of a humble primary school.
This evidence challenges the wisdom of leadership development initiatives that try to be all things

To all leaders or refuse to recognize differences in leadership practices required by differences in organizational excellence is mere context.

Beyond The Fundamentals of Successful Leaders:

Understanding the context of what happened

2. Student Population

There is still much to be learned about how leaders can successfully meet the educational needs of diverse student populations. But at that place has been a heavy spate of research bearing on both school and classroom conditions that are helpful for pupils from economically disadvantaged families and those with diverse

We come from different ethnic and racial backgrounds.Nearly whole of the early research conducted as part of the "effective schools" movement aimed to identify such conditions.In summation, a very great proportion of educational policy research concerning, for example, class size, forms of education, student grouping patterns and school size has been conducted using evidence about and from such students.This evidence suggests, for instance, that economically disadvantaged elementary students will take more in relatively small schools (250 to 300 students) and classrooms(15 to 20 students) when their teachers engage in active forms of education focused on rich, meaningful, curricular content using heterogeneous student grouping strategies. At a minimum, then, such evidence suggests that to increase the achievement of diverse student populations, leaders should assist their staffs in implementing the school and classroom conditions warranted by this research – "school leader as policy implementer." This evidence also encourages leadership to engage with other agencies able to provide musical accompaniment for scholars and their families, but without diverting leaders' attention and influence on teacher learning.The major shortcoming in much of this research, nevertheless, is that it does not identify leadership practices that are successful in ameliorating conditions in the school and classroom suggested by this research, nor does it help unpack the skills.A leader needs to wade through an often complex and not altogether coherent body of research evidence to decide which policies to follow out.For lesson, on student grouping, in particular, we ought to know more about how a leader can generate high expectations, foster a faster pace of teaching, and promote sharing of effective learning among peers and take up a more challenging course of study.

3. The Policy Context

Policy contexts change substantially over time but tend to be the same for many leaders at the same time. At the moment, large-scale, accountability-oriented policy contexts are pervasive for educational leadership across the nation.States are central actors in the enactment of educational leaders.Presently, the focus on state criteria and accountability systems is driving local decisions and policies in ways that are unprecedented.In summation, the support of local school districts has, in many states, shifted increasingly to the commonwealth, while in others it

Remains a largely local responsibility.

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That is, successful in ameliorating conditions in the school and classroom.

Whether state or local, changes in state economies also drive many local decisions, as superintendents and principals grapple with day-to-day questions about resource allocation. How these two prevailing trends are managed, both at the state and local levels, is also influenced by the state's "political culture" – a term that is

Frequently applied, but rarely considered, except in the field of recent welfare reform.

Research about successful school and district leadership practices in settings such as these is nonetheless in its early childhood, yet though the mental abilities and motivations of local leaders will significantly limit the effects of such contexts for scholars.At best, the available evidence permits us to infer some broad goals that successful. The leadership will need to adopt, acknowledging that additional research will be required to identify leadership practices that are successful in accomplishing such ends:

- **Creating and having a competitive school: This is a goal for district and school leaders when they see themselves in competition for students, for exemplar, in education "markets" that include choices to public schools such as charter, magnet and private schools, maybe supported through tuition tax credits.**
- **Empowering others to take in important decisions: This is a key destination for leaders when accountability mechanisms include giving a bigger part to community stakeholders,**

as in the case of parent-controlled school councils; encouraging data-informed decision making should be a percentage of this goal.

Providing instructional guidance: This is an important goal for leaders in almost all districts and schools aiming to better pupil learning.Simply it engages on a particular role in the context of more explicit grounds for evaluating the work of educators, as, for example, in the context of professional standards and their role for functions of ongoing professional development and personnel evaluation.

- **Training and implementing strategies and school-improvement plans: When schools are involved**

To have school-improvement plans, as in most school districts today, school leaders need to master skills associated with production planning and the execution of such programs.Virtually all district leaders need to be expert in large-scale strategic-planning procedures.

Empowering others to take in significant decisions is a key destination for leaders when accountability mechanisms include giving a bigger part to community stakeholders.

How Leadership Influences Student Learning

Our inspection of the evidence leads to three conclusions about how successful leadership influences student achievement:

1. Mostly leaders contribute to student learning indirectly, through their influence on other people or features of their systems.

This should be self-evident by just reminding ourselves about how leaders of all but the smallest districts and schools spend the bulk of their time and with whom they spend it – whether successful or none.But a considerable total of research concerning leadership effects on students has tested to assess directly

Effects; rarely causes this form of research find any effects at all. It is only when research designs start with a more advanced aspect of the scope of "variables" linking leadership practices to student learning that the effects of leaders become evident. These linkages typically get longer the larger the arrangement.And, on the whole, these chains of variables are much longer for district leaders than for school leadership.Leaders' contributions to student learning, then, depend a great bargain on their wise choice of what components of their organization to expend time and attention on. Some choices (illustrated below) will pay off much more than others.

2. The evidence provides very good clues about who or what educational leaders should pay the most Attention to within their constitutions.Teachers are key, of course, and impressive evidence suggests that their "pedagogical content knowledge" (knowledge about how to teach particular subject matter content) is fundamental to their strength.Thus, likewise, is the professional community, teachers often work with colleagues within and outside their own schools?At the classroom level, strong evidence suggests that student learning varies as a consequence of, for example, class size, student-grouping practices, the instructional practices of instructors, and the nature and extent of monitoring of student advancement.
At the school stage, evidence is quite strong in identifying, for instance, school mission and goals, culture, teachers' participation in decision making, and relationships with parents and the broader community as potentially powerful determinants of student scholarship.District conditions that are recognized to influence
Student learning include, for example, district culture, the supplying of professional development opportunities for teachers aligned with school and district priorities and policies governing the leadership taking over.Districts also contribute to pupil learning by ensuring alignment among goals, plans, policies and professional evolution.
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How Leadership Influences Student Learning
At a minimum, then, this extensive body of research provides direction for leaders' attention and time. It should likewise serve as the foundation for the further development of leadership.Leaders ask to recognize which features of their organizations should be a priority for their care.They too demand to recognize what the ideal term of each of these features is, in order to positively influence the learning of pupils.

3. We require to know a lot more about what leaders do to further develop those high-priority pieces of their establishments.No uncertainty, many of the basic and context-specific leadership practices alluded to above will be part of what leaders need to act.But evidence about the nature and influence of those patterns is not yet sufficiently fine-grained to know how a carefully selected feature of a district or school

could be consistently improved through planned intervention on the character of somebody in a leadership function.

Conclusion:

There appears little question that both district and school leadership provides a vital bridge between most educational-reform initiatives, and get those reforms a genuine difference for all scholars.Such leadership comes from many authors, not just superintendents and heads.Only those in conventional positions of authority in school systems are likely still the most influential.Attempts to improve their recruitment, preparation, evaluation and ongoing development should be considered highly cost-effective approaches to successful school

Advance.These attempts will be increasingly productive as research provides us with more robust understandings of how successful leaders make sense of and productively respond to both external policy initiatives and local needs and priorities. Such efforts will also benefit considerably from more fine-grained understandings than we currently have of successful leadership practices; and much richer appreciations of how those practices seep into the fabric of the education system, improving its overall quality and substantially adding value to our students 'learning.

There seems little doubt that both district and school leadership provides a critical bridge between most Educational-reform initiatives, and having those reforms make a genuine difference for all students welcome.

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