

Getting on the Same Page: Establishing Collective Commitments About Learning and Collaboration



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Our Learning Outcomes

- Understand the importance of developing explicit commitments with members of a team.
- Participate in strategies for developing collective commitments as a team.
- Explore processes and protocols that make values more than a one-time event.

Foundational Blocks Developing a Shared Purpose

- **Mission:** *Why?* Why do we exist?
- **Vision:** *What?* What do we want to become?
- **Values and Collective Commitments:** *How?*
How must we behave to create the school that will achieve our purpose?
- **Goals:** *How?* How will we know all of this is making a difference?

How Can You Influence Others?

People have to believe that it is worth it;
And they have to believe they can do it.

Vital Behaviors

What are the vital behaviors that create a cascade of change?



(Grenny, Patterson, Maxfield, & MacMillan, *Influencer: The New Science of Leading Change*, 2013)

Collective Commitments (Shared Values)

We have made commitments to each other regarding how we must behave in order to achieve our shared vision.

Pre-Initiating	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff members have not yet articulated the attitudes, behaviors, or commitments they are prepared to demonstrate in order to advance the mission of learning for all and the vision of what the school might become.
Initiating	<input type="checkbox"/> Administrators or a committee of teachers have created statements of beliefs regarding the school's purpose and its direction.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff members have reviewed and reacted to those statements.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Initial drafts have been amended based on staff feedback.
	<input type="checkbox"/> There is no attempt to translate the beliefs into the specific commitments or behaviors that staff will model.
Implementing	<input type="checkbox"/> A statement has been developed that articulates the specific commitments staff have been asked to embrace to help the school fulfill its purpose and move closer to its vision.
	<input type="checkbox"/> The commitments are stated as behaviors rather than beliefs.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Many staff object to specifying these commitments and prefer to focus on what other groups must do to improve the school.
Developing	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff members have been engaged in the process to articulate the collective commitments that will advance the school toward its vision.
	<input type="checkbox"/> They endorse the commitments and seek ways to bring them to life in the school.
Sustaining	<input type="checkbox"/> The collective commitments are embraced by staff, embedded in the school's culture, and evident to observers of the school. They help define the school and what it stands for.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Examples of the commitments are shared in stories and celebrations, and people are challenged when they behave in ways that are inconsistent with the collective commitments.

Why Should We Articulate Collective Commitments?

With the democratization of organizations, especially schools, the leadership function becomes one of creating a “community of shared values” (Lezotte, 1991, p3).

”Values describe how we intend to operate, on a day-to-day basis, as we pursue our vision....Values are best expressed in terms of behavior: If we act as we should, what would an observer see us doing?...If values are made a central part of the organization’s shared vision effort, and put out in full view, they become like a figurehead on a ship: a guiding symbol of the behavior that will help move people toward the vision” (Senge et al., 1994, p. 301).

Both profit and nonprofit organizations should be grounded on “a timeless set of core values and an enduring purpose” (Collins & Porras, 1994, xxiv).

“The language of complaint essentially tells us, and others, what it is we can’t stand. The language of commitment tells his (and possibly others) what it is we stand for” (Kegan & Lahey, 2001, p.32).

High-performing districts “tended to rely more on a common culture of values to shape collective action than on bureaucratic rules and controls. The shared values typically focused on improvement of student learning as the central goal” (Elmore, 2000, p.26).

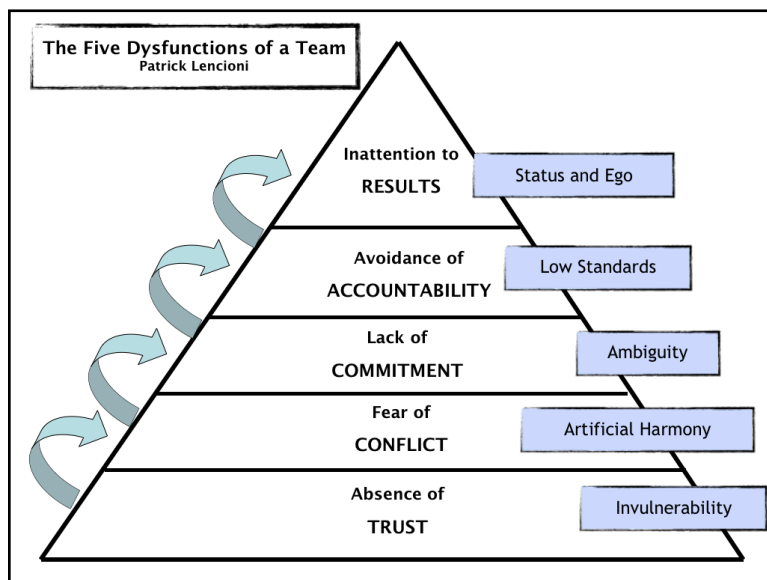
“Values provide guidelines on how you should proceed as you pursue your purpose and picture of the future. They answer the question... How? They need to be clearly described so that you know exactly what behaviors demonstrate that the value is being lived” (Blanchard, 2007, p. 30).

Values must be driven into the policy, the decision-making and ultimately the culture of the organization, otherwise value statement are just words. When values become part of an employee DNA, they not only guide day-to-day work but also empower employees to act in unique situations (Berry & Seltman, 2008).

“Values represent the *commitments to action* necessary to ensure the vision is realized.... In the best PLC cultures, vision and values ultimately become the driving force behind the decision-making process that takes place every day” (Kanold, 2001, p13).

To bring a mission statement to life “educators must be willing to transparently communicate their commitment to students as it relates to their stated mission and challenge one another to live up to that commitment? (Muhammad & Hollie, 2012, p.28).

The key to values impacting the organization in a positive way is that people have to “live by them, reinforce them every day, and not tolerate behavior that is at odds with them” (Bryant, 2104).



Embracing Accountability

- Accountability on a strong team **occurs directly among peers.**
- For a culture of accountability to thrive, a leader must demonstrate a **willingness to confront difficult issues.**
- The best opportunity for holding one another accountable occurs during meetings, and **the regular review of a team scoreboard provides a clear context for doing so.**

Achieving Commitment

- Commitment requires **clarity** and **buy-in.**
- Clarity requires that teams **avoid assumptions and ambiguity**, and that they end discussions with a clear understanding about what they've decided upon.
- Buy-in does not require consensus. Members of **great teams learn to disagree with one another and still commit to a decision.**

What's Obvious to You Is Obvious to You

1. Stand back to back with a partner.

2. On a piece of paper write:

"Characteristics I would like to see from the educators in our school."

3. Turn and face each other.

4. Share your list with the person with whom you are standing back to back.

5. Find items you have in common.



Martin Elementary School Collective Commitments (to be continued)

We will:

- ▣ Be flexible.
- ▣ Be professional.
- ▣ Be respectful.
- ▣ Be an encouraging, creative, caring, and supportive staff.
- ▣ Be dedicated and go the extra mile.
- ▣ Put kids first and be student focused.
- ▣ Be open and honest.
- ▣ Be empathetic and understanding.
- ▣ Celebrate and educate our students and each other.
- ▣ Be willing to get to know students and parents and make the connection that the school and home are a family.
- ▣ Be enthusiastic, positive, and motivated.
- ▣ Protect instructional time.
- ▣ Be knowledgeable, current, lifelong learners.
- ▣ Be unbiased, fair, and nonjudgmental.
- ▣ Be open to the community.
- ▣ Respect everyone's level of expertise.
- ▣ Be open-minded.
- ▣ Have smiles and teach smiles.
- ▣ Support a safe, consistent, and orderly learning environment.

Martin's Final Collective Commitments

1. Be professional, punctual, respectful, encouraging, cooperative, and supportive.
2. Seek all resources for student achievement.
3. Be flexible and willing to change.
4. Be lifelong learners.
5. Celebrate students and each other.
6. Be positive.
7. Have a sense of humor and laugh.
8. Resolve issues and move on.
9. Be dedicated to do whatever it takes.

How Can We Create a Result Orientation and Foster Continuous Improvement?

PLCs “require that [team] members reflect openly and honestly together about their own practice, intentionally seeking ways to do their work better and continually building their capacity to do so.” Failure to collect, present, and analyze evidence of student learning and the reluctance to make work public are major barriers to effective professional learning communities (Annenberg Institute for School Reform, 2005).

“One mark of schools that make headway on the achievement gap appears to be their propensity to promote and organize conversations based in evidence of student progress.” (Little, 2006, p. 10)

“In our work, we help practitioners frame the next level of work by examining what they are currently doing, looking at evidence of student learning for clues about what is strongest in their practice and where they might see opportunities for improvement, [and] strengthening the capacity of colleagues to work collectively on instructional issues.” (Elmore & City, 2007, p. 26)

Excellence in education requires that teachers work in collaborative teams to clarify the learning intentions and success criteria of their lessons, gather evidence of student learning, and discuss the effectiveness of their teaching based on that evidence. “Teachers [need] to share evidence about their teaching with their colleagues”; in fact, “the key question is whether teaching can shift from an immature to mature profession, from opinions to evidence.” The education profession will not mature as a profession until professional dialogue focuses on evidence of student learning rather than opinions (Hattie, 2009, pp. 252, 259).

For the first two years, none of the schools in the study experienced gains in student achievement. The dramatic gains only occurred when collaborative teams focused the collaborative inquiry on “jointly and recursively identifying appropriate and worthwhile goals for student learning; finding or developing appropriate means to assess student progress toward those goals; bringing to the table the expertise of colleagues and others who can assist in accomplishing these goals; planning, preparing, and delivering lessons; using evidence from the classroom to evaluate instruction; and, finally, reflecting on the process to determine next steps” (Gallimore et al., 2009, p. 549).

“In high-poverty schools that are helping students learn at high levels, teachers look at student achievement data” to identify which students need additional support and which need greater challenges. But this evidence of student learning is also being used to inform teacher practice. Teachers discuss why one member of the team is having success teaching a particular concept and another is not, and “what the more successful teacher can teach the less successful teacher” (Chenoweth, 2009, p. 41).

In schools that double student performance, teachers use results from common unit and interim assessments to help members of collaborative teams compare strategies and adopt those that are most effective. Instructional practice is out in the open, the subject of public and professional conversation, and the source of ongoing, job-embedded professional development (Odden & Archibald, 2009).

Mission, Vision, Values and Goals: More Than a One-Time Thing

- Begins a necessary conversation
- Reinvigorates workers
- Inspires innovation and service
- Renews commitment

Tight Elements in a PLC

- The staff works collaboratively, takes collective responsibility and clarifies commitments for working together.
- Collaborative teams work interdependently to achieve common goals for which all members are held mutually accountable.
- Teams establish a guaranteed, viable curriculum, unit by unit.

Tight Elements in a PLC

- Teams develop common formative assessments to frequently gather evidence of student learning.
- The school creates a system of interventions and extensions.
- Teams use evidence of student learning to inform and improve the individual and collective practices of the members.

Harrison School District, Harrison AR

BUILDING THE FUTURE

Every Learner | Every Day | Every Way

Vision

Harrison School District is committed to providing a safe, inclusive learning environment that inspires excellence and empowers students to achieve college and career readiness

Collective Commitments

- We will monitor each student's learning to inform and improve instruction.
- We will provide families with resources, strategies and information to keep them engaged in their child's education.
- We will work collaboratively and take collective responsibility for the success of each student.
- We will hold ourselves accountable for student learning and developing each student's potential.
- We will model everything we expect from our students, including life-long learning, positive behaviors, and respect.

Hortonville School District, Hortonville, Wisconsin

HASD Mission Statement

Our community ensures that every student learns at the highest level.

HMS / FWA Vision Statement

The HMS and FWA staff will create an environment that models good character while leading students to make responsible choices, ensuring that all students feel collectively valued, empowering students to be college and career ready and live purposeful lives.

HMS / FWA Collective Commitments

We will hold high expectations for student achievement and character, and will guide students to make responsible choices for their lives and the learning process.

- *We will collaborate to develop curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments using a variety of resources to promote active engagement and success of students.*
- *We will develop and effectively implement differentiated instruction to meet the learning styles of all students.*
- *We will provide a supportive school atmosphere where everyone (including both students and staff) feels emotionally, physically, and intellectually safe.*
- *We will act in a professional manner with integrity and honesty, and will develop relationships characterized by caring and respect while recognizing that conflict is an essential and inevitable by-product of a successful substantive change effort.*
- *We will communicate with parents and each other about students and will encourage parents to be positively involved in their children's education.*

HASD Administration Collective Commitments

- *We will regularly examine data with staff and teams to direct instructional practices.*
- *We will develop measurable goals based on data always linked to student learning.*
- *We will schedule and support meaningful collaboration time within our school day/year.*
- *We will solicit and share recommendations for improvement on an ongoing basis.*
- *We will recruit, hire, and retain staff that has the capacity to advance our mission.*

Stevenson High School (District) Vision Statement and Collective Commitments

Our vision statement rests upon five pillars: curriculum; equity, access and inclusivity; professional learning community; culture for learning; and community engagement. Each pillar is detailed below.

Curriculum

In order to ensure “Success for Every Student,” we will implement a guaranteed, viable and rigorous curriculum that meets the evolving needs of our students while prioritizing active engagement and reflective problem-solving. Our curriculum will encourage students to scrutinize evidence of their learning, challenge their thinking, and forge new understandings. We will help students gain confidence, discover their talents, and develop the skills they need to succeed in life.

Equity, Access, and Inclusivity

In order to ensure “Success for Every Student,” we will recognize every student as a valued individual. Students will learn in a safe, inclusive space, where they are taught to understand the value of their own experiences in relation to other, diverse perspectives. We will be relentless in removing barriers to full equity, access, and inclusivity in our curricular and co-curricular programming. We will establish high academic and behavioral expectations, and we will provide students with the supports required to help them meet or exceed those expectations.

Professional Learning Community

In order to ensure “Success for Every Student,” we will sustain a culture focused on learning, collaboration, and results. Our culture of continuous improvement will be driven by collective inquiry, innovative instructional practices, and learning-centered assessment and grading practices. We will implement impactful intervention strategies that provide students with more time and support when needed in order to ensure learning and achievement. As a model Professional Learning Community, we will participate in state, national, and global initiatives focused on improving educational outcomes.

Culture for Learning

In order to ensure “Success for Every Student,” all decision-making processes will be based on the best interests of our students and their learning. We will promote social-emotional learning and a healthy life balance for all students as we nurture continuous improvement and growth in their curricular and co-curricular experiences. We will encourage students to set attainable and aspirational goals, learn the value of hard work and dedication, and embrace the challenges and opportunities they will experience in high school and beyond.

Community Engagement

In order to ensure “Success for Every Student,” we will actively engage and support the Stevenson H.S. community. We value and respect our community’s diverse perspectives, and will provide opportunities for parents and others to inform and support the vision and values of our school. We will forge collaborative partnerships with those who share expertise, providing authentic and innovative student-learning experiences. We are committed to utilizing our resources and facilities to develop and implement educational and recreational opportunities as we work to connect the community and school.

Perlata's Collective Commitments

“Values define how we will act toward one another within our organization. Values identify the behaviors that the school is committed to acting upon.” -Larry Lezotte-

“Values answer the question: how must we behave to create the school that will achieve our purpose?”

“Shared values (or as we prefer, collective commitments) have been described as the “vital social glue that infuses an organization with passion and purpose.” -Rick Dufour-

- We will be optimistic and enthusiastic
- We will respect all staff, students and their families
- We will include the parents and the community in the learning process
- We will have high expectations for all students and ourselves
- We will accept responsibility for student learning and developing each student's potential
- We will identify the essential outcomes, develop a common pacing guide and teach the same standards at our grade level at the same time
- We will work collaboratively in developing instructional strategies and designing common assessments
- We will monitor the achievement of our individual students and use the results to guide our processes of continuous improvement
- ***We will model everything we expect from our students including life-long learning, positive behaviors and respect***

High Expectations - With Actions

Processing Question	What should we always see? What might we sometimes see? What would we never see?
What do we want our classrooms to look like for students and for us?	
How do we want our students to interact with each other and with us?	
What does great instruction look like in this grade, department, school?	
When students struggle, how will we respond?	

The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction

By: Robert J. Marzano, 2007 ASCD

What will we do to establish and communicate learning goals, track student progress, and celebrate success?

What will we do to help students effectively interact with new knowledge?

Summarizing and note taking, nonlinguistic representations, questioning, reflection, cooperative learning

What will we do to help students practice and deepen their understanding of new knowledge?

What will we do to help students generate and test hypotheses about new knowledge?

What will we do to engage students?

What will we do to recognize and acknowledge adherence and lack of adherence to classroom rules and procedures?

What will we do to establish and maintain effective relationships with students?

Think teacher behaviors to answer these questions. 1) What behaviors communicate an appropriate level of concern and cooperation? 2) What behaviors communicate an appropriate level of guidance and control?

What will we do to communicate high expectations for all students?

Identify expectation levels, Differentiate for low-expectancy students and let them know they are valued and learners.

What will we do to develop effective lessons organized into a cohesive unit?

Develop routine structure for each lesson,

Reflecting On Our Collective Commitments

COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT	EVIDENCE	START DOING	STOP DOING
We believe every STUDENT can LEARN	<p>Available to our students</p> <p>Supply materials</p> <p>Accept everyone</p> <p>Positive reinforcement and constructive criticism</p> <p>Show data to students weekly</p> <p>Communication to parents</p> <p>Tutoring as needed.</p> <p>Daily motivational talks</p> <p>Set personal goals</p> <p>Positive interpersonal relationships</p> <p>Saying and showing them that they can do this</p> <p>Encourage questions from students</p> <p>Identify where they are on track and where they get off track</p>	<p>Positive talks with students and staff</p> <p>Positive reinforcement, recognizing and celebrating accomplishments</p> <p>All staff recognizing students</p> <p>bring in successful alumni to talk to our students</p> <p>Teach the reality of emotions</p> <p>Understanding learning styles and apply what we know about the student to our instructional practice</p>	<p>Modeling poor attitudes and/or behavior</p> <p>Labeling students</p> <p>Making ourselves inaccessible</p> <p>Ignoring our role in specific, appropriate interventions</p>
We believe every student should be taught to be an INDEPENDENT LEARNER.	<p>Goal setting in individualized curriculum</p> <p>Showing them an example and letting them work independently</p> <p>Explain what has worked in the past and provide examples</p> <p>note-taking</p> <p>teach how to problem solve</p> <p>Teach study skills</p> <p>When students ask questions, challenge them to find the answer to their own question</p>	<p>Teach students systems for studying</p> <p>Consistently use Student Success Unit</p> <p>Intensify the effort in goal setting and having students monitor their progress</p> <p>Consistently set up action steps</p> <p>Pushing them to learn and problem solve</p>	<p>Assuming they know how to get there</p> <p>Ignoring them and start teaching them</p> <p>Stop thinking their work is sufficient work</p> <p>Letting them off the hook on note-taking, answers that are lower level answers</p> <p>Ignoring teacher accountability</p> <p>Signing-off without engaging with the work and the student</p>

COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT	EVIDENCE	START DOING	STOP DOING
We believe every student has WORTH and should be treated with HONESTY, DIGNITY, and RESPECT.	The way we address them Tell them the reality of their current situation Willingness to work with them Being present Willing to listen to their side and point of view Open the floor for open discussion Morning meeting	Hold each other accountable Welcome students at the door Recognize character traits we witness to promote honesty, dignity, respect Consult with students in safe environment that is encouraging	Embarrassing students Belittling students Stop using sarcasm Letting students push our button
SELF-ESTEEM and POSITIVE MENTAL ATTITUDE are fundamental to STUDENT FULFILLMENT.	Share examples of successes that they can relate to Small goals and celebrate small wins	Each morning recognize students who passed a unit test. Be aware of how our comments and feedback challenge students to believe in themselves. Show students how they can get to the one time pass instead of the three time fail.	Sarcasm Embarrassing Disrespecting students
We believe the goal of EDUCATION is to produce LIFELONG LEARNERS.	Drop everything and read Students enrolled in post secondary education	Everyone read! Share with students what we are reading Create awareness of career options as it relates to what our school provides Track students	Settling for a high school diploma as indicating that our job is done
The uniqueness of each student should be addressed through TEACHING/LEARNING PROCESS.	Buzz and hard copy system Advanced placement courses	Conduct learning style assessment Look at past student data Differentiate our instruction Provide interventions based on data	Ignoring differentiation One size fits all

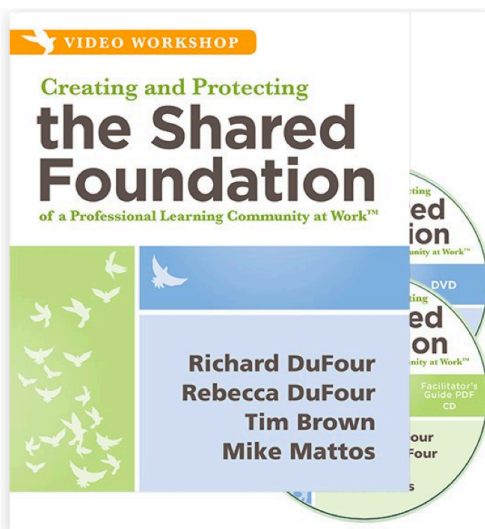
COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT	EVIDENCE	START DOING	STOP DOING
We believe quality teacher-student interaction is critical to learning.	Goal checking Take time to establish rapport Intervention program one to one tutoring	Consistent use of goal checking process lets them know that you care Student conferences that create dialogue between teacher and student	Sitting behind the desk Get out and interact with the students
Every student should be served with CONSISTENT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY.	Insist upon completion of the entire unit Everything must be done	Pay more attention to our part in the learning progression Have students show their work, practice, understanding, Calibrate scoring	Ignoring the rubric and grade with consistency
DISCIPLINE and ACCOUNTABILITY must be CONSISTENT and APPROPRIATE.	discipline students in safe environment one on one conference Classroom expectation packet	Use the student code of conduct and follow through Hold school-wide assembly to communicate expectations Every classroom have expectations posted	Addressing discipline inappropriately.
Preparing our GRADUATES so they are prepared to become productive parts of their COMMUNITY and SOCIETY.	Service Club College and career fair Off site visits Character education Random Acts of Kindness Student Council	Provide opportunities with community groups Identify the needs of the community	Settling for a high school diploma

Mission, Vision, Values and Goals: More Than a One-Time Thing

- Revisit the commitments and goals established at the beginning of the year.
- Create celebrations that recognize the journey of learning together.
- Be bold, enthusiastic, and intense, and market the environment of learning that you are creating.

Mission, Vision, and Commitments: More Than a One-Time Thing

- What are we great at?
- What do we need to get better at?
- What do we need to start doing?
- Are there some things that we need to stop doing?



Mission
Vision
Values
Goals