

## **Platform Statement 1: Using Data for Continuous School Improvement**

Effective leadership in schools hinges on the ability to use data to inform decisions that drive student achievement and well-being. Data encompasses a wide range of information, including academic and social-emotional needs. By analyzing multiple data points, leaders and teachers can work together to design interventions that meet the unique needs of their students. This ensures that data is used as a vital component of continuous school improvement, addressing both academic goals and social-emotional development, SEL (Social and Emotional Learning).

To ensure that data is useful and actionable, schools must employ multiple measures. The NELP standards emphasize the importance of a comprehensive approach, using various data points to address student needs. This includes formative and summative assessments, behavior tracking systems like PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports), and academic benchmarks. Standardized test scores and qualitative data such as student and teacher feedback can also be used as data for decision making. These multiple data sources provide a more complete picture of student performance and well-being.

It is essential for educational leaders to consider data in decision-making because it offers an evidence-based foundation that enhances the objectivity of their decisions. Leaders must understand how to interpret data and apply it strategically to create improvements. Peter Northouse emphasizes the significance of informed decision-making in leadership, noting that leaders who rely on data can better allocate resources and design interventions tailored to meet the needs of their school community. Without data, decisions might be based on assumptions, which can lead to inequitable or ineffective practices.

School leaders are tasked with creating a system of continuous feedback where data is regularly collected, analyzed, and used to inform decisions. This cycle allows schools to refine instructional practices, improve curriculum, and adjust behavioral interventions. For instance, in grade-level meetings, data can be used to evaluate whether students are meeting key benchmarks in reading and math. When data shows

gaps, instructional strategies can be adapted to address those needs. This continuous process ensures that the schools are always striving to enhance student outcomes.

Collaborative data use between leaders and teachers is key in the pursuit of best possible student outcomes. Leaders are expected to facilitate environments where data is shared openly and used collectively to solve problems. Through professional learning communities (PLCs) or dedicated data meetings, teachers and administrators work together to analyze data trends and develop strategies for improvement. This collaborative approach not only enhances the quality of decision-making but also builds a culture of shared responsibility for student success. For example, collaborative benchmark meetings can lead to more targeted interventions. Having staff members from different specialty areas bring their unique, relevant insights to the table can make data analysis more meaningful.

Effective practices in data use go beyond simply reviewing numbers, they require a comprehensive approach that incorporates both academic and social-emotional development. Leaders must ensure that data is used to support all aspects of student growth. For example, formative assessments help teachers understand which academic concepts require reteaching, while behavior data from systems like PBIS helps identify students who need additional emotional or behavioral support. For one more example, data can indicate that a group of students consistently underperform in math and targeted small-group instruction can be implemented, resulting in potential positive student growth.

Supporting students' SEL needs through data is equally important. Behavioral data allows schools to identify students who may be struggling with emotional regulation or peer relationships, offering an opportunity for early intervention. The NELP standards emphasize the importance of using data not just for academic improvement but also to create inclusive, supportive school environments. By analyzing data on attendance, behavioral incidents, and engagement, schools can proactively address issues that might otherwise go unnoticed. For instance, behavior tracking through PBIS allows a school to identify and support students who are at risk of emotional and academic disengagement.

Data plays a crucial role in shaping the future of education by providing the insights needed for continuous improvement. Schools that use multiple measures of data, ranging from academic benchmarks to behavioral observations, are better equipped to make informed decisions that support student growth. The collaborative efforts of leaders and teachers in analyzing and applying data ensure that interventions are timely and effective. As schools continue to use data to guide their practices, they will create environments that promote both academic success and the social-emotional health of all students.

## **Platform Statement 2: Leading for our Graduates of Tomorrow**

Educational leaders must adopt a future-focused mindset to prepare students for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Being a future-focused leader is critical in schools because it involves anticipating changes in society, technology, and the workforce, ensuring that students are equipped with the skills necessary to thrive in the future. Schools are no longer just simply places of academic learning, they are the launching pads for the development of future generations. This requires leaders to be forward-thinking, innovative, and adaptive.

The next generation will need a variety of skill sets that go beyond traditional academic knowledge. Students will need to master critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and adaptability to navigate an increasingly complex world. These skills are necessary to succeed in jobs that may not yet exist, as technology continues to transform industries. Additionally, emotional intelligence, resilience, and the ability to engage in lifelong learning are becoming increasingly important. In preparing for these future demands, schools must teach students, teachers, and families how to think critically, solve problems, work collaboratively, and communicate effectively.

A critical aspect of leading for the future involves educating teachers, students, and families about these necessary skills. Teachers need professional development opportunities that focus on teaching next generation competencies, while students must be given the space to practice them in authentic contexts. Leaders can promote this by fostering environments where project-based learning and experiential education are prioritized, allowing students to engage in real-world problem-solving. Parents also must be brought into this vision. They can be informed on best-practices to how they can support their children in developing next generation skills. Leaders play a key role in bridging the school community, ensuring that everyone is aligned in working toward preparing students for the future.

Developing external relationships is another critical component of effective leadership in this area. By building partnerships with businesses, higher education institutions, and community organizations, leaders can create opportunities for students. These opportunities can include engaging in internships, mentorships, and other

learning opportunities that give them first-hand exposure to the skills they need for the future. These relationships also provide schools with resources and insights that may not be available internally, helping to broaden the scope of what students need to know. Leaders who actively seek out and cultivate these partnerships demonstrate a commitment to expanding the possibilities for their students.

Transformational leadership is required to move schools into a future-focused orientation. Leaders must inspire and motivate their staff to embrace change and work collectively toward a shared vision of the future. Peter Northouse explains that transformational leadership is particularly effective in fostering these kinds of paradigm shifts. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate staff to pursue a shared vision. A future-focused vision involves preparing students with the skills they will need to succeed in an ever-changing world, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and adaptability. Schools need to move away from outdated, traditional methods of instruction and embrace more dynamic, flexible approaches. This includes integrating technology in meaningful ways, promoting interdisciplinary learning, and encouraging both students and teachers to take risks and think outside the box.

Future-focused leaders must be deeply invested in the future of education. These leaders should be constantly engaged in learning themselves, reading scholarly journals and sharing in the latest research on best practices. They should encourage professional learning communities (PLCs) where teachers could collaborate, discuss innovative ideas, and reflect on their practices. This culture of continuous improvement helps create an environment where both teachers and students feel empowered to grow and adapt.

The National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) standards emphasize the importance of mission, vision, and continuous improvement in educational leadership. Leaders are expected to create a vision for the future that is grounded in current research and best practices, ensuring that all students are prepared for the challenges of tomorrow. This vision must be communicated clearly and consistently, serving as a guide for all decision-making processes within the school. What is more, leaders must build a culture of trust and collaboration. Teachers should feel supported in taking risks and trying new approaches to teaching and learning.

Leading the next generation of tomorrow requires a future-focused approach that anticipates the skills and knowledge students will need in an ever-changing world. Leaders can ensure that schools are preparing students for the future by fostering a culture of innovation, building strong external partnerships, and empowering educators. This requires a shift away from traditional methods and toward a more dynamic, flexible approach to education, where creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking are prioritized. Through transformational leadership and a commitment to continuous improvement, educational leaders can create schools that are not only responsive to the present but also prepared for the future.

### **Platform Statement 3: Implementing a Standards-Based Curricula for a Global Society**

The effective implementation of curriculum aims to prepare students for the rapidly evolving world they will encounter upon graduation. This world is defined by technological advancements, shifting societal expectations, and increasing global interconnectivity. Successful curriculum implementation requires the development of a sound plan, clear communication with educators, ongoing monitoring in classrooms, and professional development tailored to teacher needs. These interconnected steps ensure that school districts adopt and execute curriculum plans that equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in a dynamic future.

School districts must continuously adapt to the demands of an ever-changing world by fostering collaborative and innovative learning environments. The Age of Information has transformed education and the workplace, emphasizing the importance of critical thinking, adaptability, and lifelong learning. Districts must recognize that students are not merely learners but also future problem-solvers and innovators. A robust curriculum serves as a bridge, connecting students to the opportunities and challenges of their futures, ensuring they are prepared for personal, academic, and professional success.

Standards, such as the Common Core, provide an essential framework for curriculum development. These standards, adopted by most states, outline consistent educational expectations, enabling students to transition between schools without significant academic disruption. Moreover, the global alignment of these standards ensures that U.S. students remain competitive in an international context. The emphasis

on critical thinking and lifelong learning within the standards reflects the skills necessary for success in a world defined by technological advances and constant change.

The Information Age has reshaped human behavior and learning. Skills have shifted from merely retrieving information to processing and analyzing it. As traditional modes of learning give way to digital and virtual methods, education must adapt. Critical thinking, adaptability, and a commitment to lifelong learning are now essential. To meet these demands, school districts must embrace innovation, foster collaborative learning communities, and prioritize research-based practices.

An effective curriculum must also align with diverse national, state, and local standards, including those for technology integration, career development, and social-emotional learning. These standards ensure a comprehensive approach that addresses the academic, personal, and professional growth of students. Additionally, involving a broad range of stakeholders—educators, families, industry partners, and alumni—enriches curriculum development. Stakeholders provide invaluable insights that help shape programs aligned with real-world expectations and opportunities.

Ultimately, effective curriculum implementation is about ensuring students graduate ready to thrive in a fast-paced, global society. By adhering to modern standards, engaging diverse stakeholders, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement, districts can create learning environments that empower students. Through thoughtful planning, collaboration, and innovation, school systems can prepare their students not just for graduation, but for a lifetime of success in an ever-changing world.



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## **Platform Statement 5: Fostering School-Wide Responsive Practices**

The success of a school depends on the effectiveness of its systems in promoting equity, inclusion, and student-centered learning. Leaders play a pivotal role in developing, implementing, and overseeing these systems to ensure they meet the needs of all students. Effective systems, such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), are designed to foster academic, behavioral, social, and emotional growth while addressing diverse needs within the school community. By prioritizing responsive practices and maintaining a focus on equity, leaders can build a high-performing school culture where every student has access to the resources and opportunities necessary for success.

Leadership in schools involves strategic decision-making, collaboration with stakeholders, and adherence to policy and legal frameworks to create and maintain effective systems. A key responsibility of leaders is monitoring these systems to ensure they function as intended. For example, a principal implementing PBIS might review monthly behavior data to identify patterns and determine whether specific interventions are reducing behavioral issues. Similarly, leaders overseeing MTSS might analyze progress-monitoring data to evaluate the effectiveness of academic interventions and adjust them as needed. By using data-driven approaches, leaders can identify areas for improvement and ensure systems remain responsive to student needs.

Improving systems requires active engagement with stakeholders and the ability to address challenges proactively. Leaders can solicit feedback from staff, students, and families to identify barriers to implementation. For instance, teachers might express difficulty balancing intervention planning with other responsibilities. To address this, a school leader could provide professional development on efficient intervention strategies or implement user-friendly data management tools to streamline processes. Additionally, leaders might collaborate with

specialists, such as school psychologists or reading teachers to distribute workloads and enhance the system. Many hands lighten the load.

Effective leadership also involves practical actions that demonstrate accountability and responsiveness. Decision-making processes must be grounded in evidence and aligned with the school's goals. For example, a leader may analyze attendance data to identify at-risk students and develop a school-wide improvement plan, such as establishing mentoring programs or creating incentives for improved attendance. Collaboration with stakeholders is equally important. A school leader might engage parents, teachers, and community members in refining policies, such as a new homework framework, to ensure it supports equity and considers the diverse needs of families. Furthermore, leaders must ensure compliance with legal requirements, such as those mandated under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), by regularly reviewing data to verify that students receive the services outlined in their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

The role of leadership extends beyond maintaining systems to fostering a high-performing school culture. High-performing schools are characterized by environments where students thrive academically, behaviorally, and emotionally. Leaders achieve this by integrating research-based frameworks such as PBIS and MTSS into the school's operational plan. For example, a school implementing PBIS might establish clear behavioral expectations—such as being respectful, responsible, and safe—while teaching these expectations explicitly to all students. Data monitoring might reveal a 20% reduction in office discipline referrals within a year, leading to increased instructional time and enhanced student engagement.

MTSS provides another example of how effective systems contribute to a high-performing school culture. By proactively addressing student needs through data-driven interventions, MTSS ensures students receive the support they need to succeed. For instance, a school might use universal screening tools to identify students struggling with reading

comprehension and provide targeted small-group instruction to improve their skills.

Progress-monitoring data might show a measurable improvement in reading proficiency, demonstrating the system's impact on student outcomes.

Culturally responsive teaching and trauma-informed practices further strengthen the connection between systems and high performance. Leaders ensure teachers receive professional development on recognizing and addressing students' diverse needs, fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment. For example, implementing restorative practices can reduce suspensions and build stronger relationships between students and staff. A school adopting these practices might see a reduction in suspensions among students, reflecting the effectiveness of a responsive and equitable approach.

While implementing systems like PBIS and MTSS can present challenges, effective leadership addresses these barriers through strategic planning and collaboration. Resistance to PBIS, for instance, might stem from staff skepticism or concerns about increased workload. Leaders can overcome this by sharing data that demonstrates success in similar schools and involving teachers in decision-making about PBIS practices. In the case of MTSS, leaders can streamline data collection processes and engage additional staff to manage interventions, ensuring the system remains sustainable.

The role of leadership is integral to the success of school systems that promote equity, inclusion, and student-centered learning. By monitoring, evaluating, and improving these systems, leaders create a foundation for high-performing schools. Through frameworks like PBIS and MTSS, schools can foster environments where all students have the resources and opportunities to succeed. Leaders who prioritize culturally responsive teaching, trauma-informed practices, and stakeholder collaboration work to ensure that every student's needs are met, paving the way for a thriving school culture and improved student outcomes.

## **Platform Statement 6:**

### **Developing Collaborative Partnerships with Families and the Community**

Educational leaders play a key role in fostering productive and collaborative partnerships with families and community members. These partnerships are crucial for creating a supportive learning environment that enhances student success both in and out of the classroom. Establishing these relationships requires intentional strategies, effective communication, and sustainable connections that engage even the most reluctant families. Furthermore, engaging with community partners strengthens student learning through valuable resources, experiences, and opportunities.

To establish productive partnerships with families and the community, educational leaders must cultivate trust, mutual respect, and shared goals. One of the fundamental steps in building these relationships is recognizing families and community members as valuable stakeholders in the educational process. Leaders must adopt an inclusive approach that acknowledges the diverse backgrounds, cultures, and needs of the school community.

A vision-driven approach is essential in setting the foundation for collaboration. Leaders should articulate a clear and compelling vision for partnership efforts, aligning them with the school's mission and student learning goals. Establishing advisory committees that include parents, community members, and school staff can provide a structured forum for dialogue, input, and decision making. When families and community stakeholders feel heard and valued, they are more likely to actively participate in the school.

Effective communication is at the core of successful school-family-community collaboration. Leaders must implement multiple communication channels to ensure accessibility and engagement across diverse populations. Traditional methods such as newsletters, parent-teacher conferences, and phone calls remain relevant, but digital platforms and social media have become invaluable tools for real-time updates and interactive discussions.

One key strategy is to host regular community forums and family engagement nights, allowing stakeholders to connect with school leadership in a meaningful way. These events can address topics relevant to student success, including curriculum updates, mental health resources, and college and career readiness. Additionally, schools can establish digital platforms, such as mobile applications or online portals, where families can access important school information, report concerns, and receive timely responses.

Language accessibility is another critical aspect of effective communication. Schools serving multilingual communities must ensure that interpreters, translated materials, and culturally relevant engagement strategies are in place. When families can communicate in their preferred language, they feel more empowered to participate in their child's education.

Beyond formal communication strategies, informal relationship building efforts also play a significant role. Home visits by teachers and administrators, school open houses, and community walk-throughs help leaders connect with families in their own environments. When leaders actively engage in community spaces, they demonstrate a commitment to building genuine and lasting partnerships.

Engaging families who may be hesitant or reluctant to participate in school activities requires a nuanced and empathetic approach. Many families face barriers such as work schedules, transportation challenges, past negative experiences with schools, or cultural differences that make engagement difficult. Addressing these barriers requires a commitment to flexibility and inclusivity.

One effective approach is to create welcoming school environments where families feel safe and valued. Family resource centers within schools can provide a designated space for parents to access support services, attend workshops, and interact with school personnel in a non-intimidating setting. Flexible meeting times, including virtual options, accommodate families with demanding schedules and responsibilities.

Another strategy is to integrate family involvement into student learning experiences. Project-based learning initiatives that invite parents to contribute their skills, knowledge, or professional expertise create authentic engagement opportunities.

When families see the direct impact of their involvement on student success, they are more likely to remain engaged over time.

Beyond family engagement, school leaders must cultivate partnerships with the community and beyond to strengthen student learning. These partnerships provide resources, mentorship opportunities, and real-world learning experiences that enrich the educational landscape.

Partnerships with local government agencies, libraries, and health services offer essential support in areas such as student wellness, literacy development, and civic engagement. Schools can collaborate with local businesses to create internship and apprenticeship programs that expose students to career pathways and hands-on learning experiences. Higher education institutions can offer dual enrollment opportunities, tutoring programs, and college readiness initiatives that prepare students for post-secondary success.

Non-profit and community organizations play a critical role in supporting student development beyond the classroom. Organizations focused on mental health, social services, and afterschool enrichment provide vital resources to students and families. By forming strategic alliances, school leaders can create wraparound support systems that address academic, emotional, and social needs.

Developing collaborative partnerships with families and the community is a fundamental responsibility of educational leaders. By establishing trust, fostering open communication, engaging reluctant families, and leveraging community resources, leaders create a strong support network for student success. These partnerships not only enhance academic achievement but also promote social-emotional well-being and lifelong learning opportunities. Schools that prioritize meaningful collaboration with families and community members cultivate a culture of shared responsibility and collective impact, leading to improved outcomes for all students.

## **Platform Statement 7:**

### **Leading, Implementing and Sustaining Systemic Organizational Change**

Systemic organizational change is an intricate process requiring careful planning, strategic leadership, and ongoing evaluation. The essential elements for systemic change: methods for assessing organizational culture, the life cycle of change initiatives, strategies to engage resistance, and the roles of stakeholders, shape the success of a transformation.

For systemic change to occur, several foundational elements must be present. A clear and compelling vision is essential. This vision aligns stakeholders around shared goals and ensures that change initiatives are purposeful and consistent with organizational priorities. The importance of a vision in transformational leadership is essential, which inspires and motivates stakeholders to embrace change. Effective communication channels are also vital. Transparent, consistent, and multi-directional communication ensures that all stakeholders understand the rationale for change and their roles in the process. Data-driven decision-making supports credibility and direction, with metrics to evaluate current practices, define benchmarks, and track progress playing a crucial role. Finally, fostering a culture of adaptability and collaboration is critical. Resistance to change often stems from fear or lack of understanding, making a supportive school culture indispensable.

Leaders assess organizational culture and climate through various tools and methods. Surveys, such as the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire, offer insights into staff perceptions, engagement, and readiness for change. Focus groups



and interviews provide qualitative data to understand underlying attitudes and concerns. A leader's role is to interpret data to identify strengths and areas for growth. Observing behaviors, evaluating feedback mechanisms, and analyzing performance trends further inform the cultural and climate assessment.

Change initiatives follow a cyclical process. Change begins with identifying a need and setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals. Strategic planning incorporates stakeholder input to ensure alignment with organizational priorities. Leaders establish clear timelines, provide professional development, and allocate resources. Regular checkpoints, feedback loops, and progress tracking are integral to sustaining momentum. Data collection tools, such as fidelity checks and classroom observations, assess the application of new practices. The success of change initiatives is measured against predefined outcomes.

Resistance is an inherent aspect of organizational change, but leaders can employ specific strategies to address it. Leaders must engage in active listening, validating concerns while clarifying misunderstandings. Building trust and demonstrating empathy create an environment conducive to dialogue. Involving resisters in the change process can transform them into allies. Providing roles that allow them to contribute to planning and decision-making increases their investment in the outcomes. Offering professional development and coaching helps resisters build confidence and competence in new practices. Supportive leadership underscores the value of providing resources to address skill gaps and reduce resistance. Maintaining consistent and transparent communication helps alleviate fears and reinforce the benefits of change.

Key stakeholders play pivotal roles in the long-range planning process. Teachers, as primary implementers, require training and resources to adapt to changes effectively. School administrators act as facilitators, bridging the gap between district leadership and classroom practice. Parents and community members provide feedback and advocacy, ensuring that change initiatives align with community values. District leaders and policymakers establish the vision and allocate resources, while professional development coaches and consultants provide the expertise needed for successful implementation.

The literacy initiative in Oswego County serves as an illustrative case of systemic organizational change. The requirement for all teachers to undergo LETRS 1 and 2 training, as well as Kilpatrick drill training, presented significant challenges. Resistance arose from workload concerns, varying levels of readiness, and skepticism about the initiative's efficacy. Leaders addressed these challenges by providing targeted professional development, continuous coaching, and clear communication about the initiative's goals. As teachers gained proficiency, the implementation's success became evident in improved literacy outcomes. The initiative's success highlights the importance of systemic planning, stakeholder engagement, and ongoing evaluation in achieving organizational change.

Systemic organizational change is a multifaceted process requiring visionary leadership, comprehensive planning, and stakeholder collaboration. By assessing organizational culture, fostering open communication, addressing resistance, and leveraging the roles of key stakeholders, leaders can implement and sustain transformative initiatives.

## **Justin Tossas, Platform 8:**

### **Managing School Budgets and Strategic Resource Allocation**

Managing school budgets and strategically allocating resources is a critical aspect of educational leadership that requires thoughtful planning, stakeholder engagement, and adherence to financial accountability. By understanding the components of a school budget, aligning resources with student and staff needs, and fostering collaboration, leaders can create environments conducive to success.

A school budget encompasses several primary components, including salaries and benefits, instructional materials, facilities maintenance, technology, transportation, and extracurricular programs. Salaries and benefits typically represent the largest portion of the budget, ensuring the retention and recruitment of high-quality staff. Instructional materials and technology directly support student learning and engagement, while facilities maintenance ensures safe and functional spaces. Allocating resources to transportation and extracurricular activities demonstrates a commitment to accessibility and well-rounded development.

Effective leaders manage fiscal, physical, and technological resources by aligning them with educational goals and priorities. Fiscal resources are carefully monitored to ensure compliance with local, state, and federal regulations while meeting the needs of diverse learners. Physical resources, such as school buildings and equipment, are maintained and upgraded to provide safe and efficient learning environments. Technological resources are integrated strategically, offering tools that enhance instructional practices and professional development. Leaders must balance short-term demands with long-term investments to achieve sustainable progress.

Decisions regarding the strategic allocation of resources involve data-driven processes that consider student achievement, equity, and community needs. Leaders use metrics such as academic performance data, attendance rates, and feedback from stakeholders to prioritize investments. Collaborative decision-making processes, including input from teachers, parents, and community members, ensure transparency and shared accountability. For instance, during resource allocation for new technology, leaders may consult with instructional staff to identify tools that align with curricular goals and professional development needs.

Preparing and communicating the school budget is a multi-step process that begins with assessing the previous year's expenditures and identifying future priorities. Leaders collaborate with finance officers and departmental heads to draft budgets that align with the district's strategic plan. Once prepared, the budget is reviewed and approved by the school board before being shared with stakeholders. Clear communication is key; leaders use public forums, newsletters, and digital platforms to explain budget priorities and solicit feedback. Transparency fosters trust and encourages community investment in the school's success.

Families and community members play vital roles in the school budgeting process. Their input helps leaders understand unique needs and expectations, ensuring that budgets reflect the values of the community. Through parent-teacher associations, advisory committees, and public hearings, families contribute ideas and advocate for programs that benefit students. Community members, including business leaders and local organizations, often support schools through partnerships and donations, extending the reach of limited resources.

From practical observations and experiences, it is evident that budgets can be leveraged creatively to enhance opportunities for students. For example, leaders have successfully allocated discretionary funds to facilitate field trips that enrich learning experiences or to purchase materials for school events that foster community engagement. These initiatives often rely on cultivating strong relationships with the school business leader, who provides expertise in balancing fiscal responsibility with innovative solutions. Building collaborative networks is a hallmark of effective leadership, enabling schools to maximize the impact of their resources.

An example of strategic allocation can be a district prioritizing the implementation of new literacy programs by reallocating funds from less critical areas and securing grants for professional development. Teachers receive training in evidence-based practices, and classrooms are equipped with updated instructional materials. This strategic approach not only improves reading outcomes but also reinforces the importance of aligning resources with educational goals.

Managing school budgets and strategically allocating resources requires leaders to balance competing demands, engage stakeholders, and maintain a focus on student success. By leveraging data, fostering collaboration, and communicating transparently, leaders can build trust and drive meaningful change. Examples from real-world scenarios demonstrate that thoughtful resource management is instrumental in creating high-performing school cultures that benefit all members of the community.

## **Platform Statement 9:**

### **Resilient Leadership in the Face of School Crises**

Resilient leadership in the face of school crises is essential for ensuring the safety, well-being, and academic success of all stakeholders. It addresses challenges with proactive measures, fosters collaboration, and embeds trauma-sensitive practices into school operations. Embedding trauma-informed principles into daily practices empowers staff and students to thrive despite adversity. An effective plan that is well communicated and proactively implemented by a principal is invaluable for preparing school buildings to handle crises, ensuring staff, families, and students are equipped to respond effectively and maintain a safe and supportive environment.

Effective collaboration between school leaders, staff, and community agencies involves joint planning sessions and using local resources to create a robust emergency response plan. Resilient leadership requires clear communication, decision-making under pressure, and partnerships with key stakeholders, including local agencies, parents, and mental health professionals. Communication is key. Leaders must regularly conduct training and simulations to prepare all parties for potential crises, emphasizing proactive planning and stakeholder involvement to foster school resilience and alignment.

The resulting emergency response plan should be shared in a variety of communication methods, such as regular newsletters and interactive workshops, to ensure all stakeholders are well-informed and prepared. This includes disseminating information through various channels such as digital platforms, community meetings, and training sessions. For example, during Leader in Me Family Nights, families can

participate in leadership skill-building activities that reinforce community values and resilience. Additionally, safety procedures can be briefly reviewed with students at school assemblies. Transformational leadership principles suggest that clear articulation of a shared vision fosters collaboration and collective action. School leaders must ensure that all staff members, students, and families understand roles in emergencies.

Prevention measures to ensure student health and safety are critical in resilient school environments. Leaders should implement policies promoting well-being, including anti-bullying frameworks, health assessments, and mental health counseling services to nurture a high-performing school culture. Evidence from the COVID-19 pandemic highlights the need for flexible, adaptable leadership to mitigate risks while maintaining continuity in education.

Proactive interventions to address students' potential mental health conditions include comprehensive training for staff on recognizing signs of mental health issues and implementing early intervention strategies. Leaders must establish partnerships with community organizations to provide specialized support for students in need. The development of individualized support plans and school-wide programs to enhance social-emotional learning further equips students to cope with challenges.

Resilient leadership in school crises integrates trauma-sensitive education principles, strategic collaboration for emergency planning, and inclusive communication methods to build a thriving school culture. Prevention measures and proactive mental health interventions further ensure the safety and well-being of all students. By adopting these strategies, school leaders can foster resilience and adaptability, positioning their

buildings to navigate challenges effectively while supporting the holistic development of their school communities.



## **Justin Tossas, Platform 10:**

### **Supervision for the Improvement of Instruction**

The purpose of instructional supervision is to guide and support teachers in enhancing their instructional practices, ultimately improving student learning outcomes. Effective supervision fosters a school culture centered on continuous improvement, where teaching and learning are prioritized to drive student achievement. Instructional leadership is the process of influencing and guiding a group toward a common goal, which in this context is improving educational outcomes for all students. Instructional leadership can be conceptualized through different lenses, including a social justice logic, which emphasizes addressing inequitable outcomes for marginalized groups. This perspective encourages leaders to not only support teachers but also challenge systemic inequities that affect student achievement. By promoting professional development, facilitating collaborative growth, and conducting meaningful teacher evaluations, the supervisor creates an environment where both teachers and students thrive.

In the supervisory process, curriculum, instruction, and assessments play vital roles in guiding instructional leaders to make informed decisions that enhance teaching practices and student outcomes. By aligning classroom observations and feedback cycles with curriculum standards and assessment data, supervisors can more effectively identify areas where teachers need support. For example, an instructional leader might review student performance on formative assessments to detect trends in specific content areas, which could reveal gaps in both curriculum and instruction. This allows leaders to tailor professional development or coaching to address these needs directly. It's highly important to use actionable data and measurable improvements, such as standardized test scores, to drive instructional changes that support student achievement.

Furthermore, insights from pre-observation conference models show how setting clear objectives for data collection in advance fosters more focused supervision, ensuring that both

teachers and supervisors align on improvement goals. This data-driven approach ensures that supervision not only improves instruction but also aligns with broader systems such as curriculum development and assessment practices. By using data to monitor student progress, instructional leaders can ensure that their feedback to teachers is targeted and effective, directly supporting improved student achievement. This holistic approach ensures that supervision is not a standalone process but is integrated with other systems to promote continuous improvement and academic success.

Effective instructional leadership is vital to creating a high-performing school culture. School principals face many challenges, such as managing multiple roles and responding to community expectations, which shape their supervisory approaches. By prioritizing open communication and relationship-building with teachers, staff, and stakeholders, these leaders foster trust, a critical element of effective supervision. This trust-based supervision allows leaders to guide and support teachers in meeting instructional goals, ultimately improving teaching and learning environments.

Similarly, the importance of pre-observation conferences in establishing trust is extremely high, as they provide opportunities for open discussions on teaching practices and setting clear, non-evaluative goals for improvement. Leadership beliefs, when clearly articulated, offer direction and consistency, ensuring that teachers align their practices with the school's mission. To manage competing demands, instructional leaders create structured opportunities like professional learning communities and shared decision-making processes. These structures not only promote collaboration but also empower teachers to take ownership of their professional growth, encouraging innovation without fear of failure. Ultimately, these efforts ensure that all staff work towards a shared vision of excellence in education.

Supervision and instructional leadership are essential to cultivating teacher growth and enhancing student achievement. Instructional leadership involves more than overseeing teachers, it is about building high-quality relationships that promote continuous development.

Through Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) theory, leaders can foster strong, trust-based relationships with teachers by ensuring open communication, support, and respect, ultimately positioning them within the "in-group". For example, an instructional leader might establish regular one-on-one meetings with teachers to discuss their instructional practices and offer constructive feedback, allowing for a supportive environment where teachers feel valued and understood. Additionally, leaders can use data from classroom observations to provide targeted professional development, such as workshops on differentiated instruction or classroom management, based on individual teacher needs. Effective instructional leaders focus on creating an environment where all teachers have opportunities to progress, offering individualized development tailored to their unique needs.

Moreover, effective instructional leadership demands both detailed knowledge of teaching practices and utilization of varied strategies to engage teachers. Leaders who implement LMX not only align professional development with individual teacher needs and school goals, but also fosters accountability by setting clear, collaborative goals and establishing trust. For example, during a pre-observation conference, a leader can work with teachers to set specific targets for instructional improvement, offering a clear focus that reinforces the leader's commitment to supporting teacher growth. By linking professional development with performance, leaders provide actionable feedback while holding themselves accountable for fostering an inclusive culture that supports educators.

Effective instructional leadership fosters teacher development and enhances student outcomes by building strong, supportive relationships. Strategies like Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) create collaborative environments, encouraging professional growth. Research indicates that leaders who set clear goals and provide consistent support boost teacher engagement and reduce emotional exhaustion, promoting a culture of continuous improvement that benefits both educators and students.

## **Platform Statement 11: Maintaining High Standards for Hiring, Personnel Management and Professional Development Platform Statement**

It is the role of school leadership to uphold high ethics in regards to personnel management. The decisions of districts should always be in the best interest of children. New teachers should be informed of all cultural ethics of a building when undergoing orientation and mentoring. Existing staff should be creating, reviewing, and performing by an agreed upon set of building/district ethics that satisfies the objectives of the district. The content of a district's ethical standards should be revisited constantly, as they are the social contract of the district's workings. All standards should be in the best interest of students. It is up to school leadership to ensure this type of ethical environment exists.

Effective personnel decisions involve understanding the appropriate background information and involve the appropriate people for a given circumstance. For example, knowledge of civil service law allows district leadership to properly hire school classified civil servant positions. As well, proper knowledge of education law allows school districts to properly navigate through teacher probationary and tenure processes successfully. Depending on the nature of a school personnel circumstance, the proper attendees should be at all meetings/undertakings. Having proper background knowledge and correct attendees in meetings/undertakings is conducive to effective personnel decisions.

Knowledge of various employee contracts is also essential to effective personnel management. For instance, it is important for school leadership to know how grievance processes, teacher discipline, as well as other member rights. Effective leadership

should seek to not breach employee contractual agreements. Knowledge of the various employee contracts of school employees is necessary to that end.

School leadership can work to promote a climate and culture of professional growth through personnel management by allowing for clear and meaningful feedback/objectives during teacher evaluations, guidance notes, and improvement plans. Teacher evaluations should be fair and consistent with positive feedback that gives clear steps for improvement. Teacher guidance notes should be objective (free of emotion), logical, and give clear steps for improvement and growth, just as with evaluations. Teacher improvement plans should document the area of concern clearly, discuss what are the best practices, and steps that can be taken towards improvement. These are all ways in which district leadership can promote professional growth through effective personnel management. Leadership can demonstrate their commitment to teacher development through engaging in these administrative responsibilities with a growth mindset.

School leadership can uphold high ethical standards in school districts largely by performing administrative tasks with the proper fidelity. The key to this fidelity starts with good leadership understanding of civil service and education law as well as employee contracts. This fidelity continues when school leadership perform their human resources tasks in regards to evaluations, notes, and plans with objective, growth-oriented, clear language. Finally, the ultimate fidelity is to the students. School leadership should always have the best interests of students in mind. A culture of high ethical standards,

with a growth mindset, can begin to occur when the school leader upholds these practices.

## **Platform Statement 12: Leadership Style**

Effective educational leadership stems from a blend of knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions, all of which are shown through a collaborative and adaptive leadership style. These approaches prioritize relationship-building, collective ownership, and empowerment across the school community. Leaders who operate with this mindset actively bring out the best in others by encouraging participation, fostering trust, and valuing every stakeholder's contributions to shared goals.

Collaboration is at the heart of this. It emphasizes that no one person holds all the answers, and the most effective solutions often emerge through inclusive conversations and teamwork. By creating structures such as professional learning communities, data teams, and advisory groups, the leader ensures that decision-making is distributed and transparent. This not only enhances the quality of decisions but also builds capacity among staff members, students, and families to take ownership of the school's mission and vision.

Flexibility and adaptability are equally important elements to effective leadership as well. An effective leader never treats two situations the same. Each challenge demands individual attention and thoughtful consideration. This emphasizes the need to adjust one's approach depending on the readiness, needs, and dynamics of the stakeholders involved.

Courage is sometimes required to show up in successful schools as well. It can be demonstrated in the advocacy for social justice and equity, even when it is inconvenient, unpopular, or difficult. Ethical leadership requires standing up for what is right and ensuring that all students, especially those from historically underserved

populations, have the resources and opportunities they need to succeed. This includes challenging inequitable systems, adopting inclusive practices, and promoting culturally responsive teaching. Courage is also required to lead difficult conversations about bias, access, and privilege, conversations that are essential to shaping a school environment where every student and staff member feels seen, heard, and valued.

Change in education often comes with uncertainty, anxiety, and sometimes even resistance. Effective leaders acknowledge these realities while also providing clarity, vision, and encouragement. By communicating the seriousness and purpose behind the change effort, leaders help others understand the “why” in the process of change. At the same time, they position themselves as partners in problem-solving, helping others explore solutions, troubleshoot obstacles, and celebrate small wins along the way. This dual approach, clear explanation coupled with compassionate support, ensures that change is both meaningful and manageable.

Collaboration and adaptability are core values of effective leadership. They shape interactions, initiatives, and culture inside of buildings and districts. These values allow trust to build foundations for all relationships, equity to ensure systems are fair and inclusive, and empowerment to allow individuals to contribute their expertise. Collaboration and adaptability transform schools into places where people work together to overcome obstacles, leadership is distributed rather than centralized, and where success is a collective achievement. Schools led in this way become inclusive, vibrant learning communities where student outcomes are improved, staff feel supported and engaged, and families are welcomed partners.



## **Platform Statement 13: Ethics and Professionalism**

Ethical leadership and professionalism are essential for fostering trust, integrity, and equity within educational institutions. Effective leadership requires administrators to navigate moral and legal complexities while prioritizing the success and well-being of students, staff, and the broader school community. Ethical leadership and professionalism integrates transparency, accountability, and a steadfast commitment to professional norms of integrity, fairness, and perseverance.

Ethical leadership begins with a clear understanding of values, beliefs, and the moral implications of decisions. Leaders must consistently uphold fairness, equity, and respect for diverse perspectives. This commitment aligns with a broader focus on inclusiveness and cultural responsiveness, fostering environments that encourage academic achievement and personal growth for all stakeholders. Courage and adaptability are essential as leaders address challenges, ensuring that their decisions reflect the best interests of all stakeholders.

Effective leaders engage in decision-making processes that consider the impact of their choices on all stakeholders. This involves identifying individuals affected by decisions, analyzing potential outcomes, and ensuring actions are legally compliant and ethically sound. Leaders must anticipate both short- and long-term ramifications, ensuring that all decisions are equitable and respectful. Upholding fairness and respect not only preserves the institution's moral standing but also strengthens trust among stakeholders.

Servant leadership plays a crucial role in creating environments that foster trust and mutual respect. By prioritizing the needs of others, servant leaders demonstrate a

commitment to the well-being of their teams, thereby enhancing collaboration and productivity. Servant leaders build strong organizational cultures by focusing on the growth and success of their followers, creating a ripple effect that benefits the entire institution. This leadership style aligns with the ethical principles of integrity and fairness, ensuring that all stakeholders feel valued and empowered.

Ethical leadership also requires courage to make difficult decisions, particularly when addressing systemic inequities or reallocating resources to prioritize student success. Leaders must demonstrate accountability and transparency, building confidence and trust within their communities. For example, reallocating district resources to address disparities in student outcomes may be challenging but reflects a commitment to equity and inclusion.

High-performing school cultures are built on the foundation of ethical leadership. By fostering collaboration, integrity, and mutual respect, leaders create environments where all members feel valued and empowered. Engaging diverse stakeholders in meaningful discussions about institutional priorities ensures transparency and builds trust. Leadership that prioritizes fairness and inclusiveness enhances the institution's capacity to achieve its mission.

Ethical leadership demands a reflective, deliberate approach that balances the needs of individuals with the goals of the institution. Leaders must model integrity and accountability, ensuring that every decision contributes to an equitable, inclusive school. By adhering to professional norms and demonstrating a commitment to equity, leaders help build high-performing schools that prioritize the success and well-being of all stakeholders.