

## **COMPETENCY 1.0**

## **FACILITATING CHANGE THROUGH A SHARED EDUCATIONAL VISION**

### **Skill 1.1 Demonstrating knowledge of how to implement key concepts, principles, and applications of the change process**

Today, the school principal is recognized as a critical person for impacting instructional change and bringing to fruition the goals and objectives of a school. The kind and quality of leadership exercised by those invested with the authority to supervise school operations makes a difference in the lives of students, the community, and ultimately the nation. Hence, the role of the principal and the competencies that an individual brings to this position are key elements in creating dynamic and effective school organizations. (The changes of the schools are very important and to make that happen different people have to play a role).

Change is always easier to talk about than it is to accomplish. Yet change must be a consistent element of organizational vitality. Determining when to change and what to change in the organizational milieu presents difficulties for a leader. People resist change for a variety of reasons. Perhaps the most prominent barrier to change is the threat it poses to individual roles and the perceived security individuals have in an organization. Human beings resist change almost instinctively. Regardless of the way a certain task is being performed, individuals engaged in performing it are familiar with the details and comfortable using the existing format.

Change is viewed as disruptive because members of an organization have devoted energy and resources to accomplishing certain tasks in prescribed ways. To alter the methodology suggests a threat to competency—given a new way of doing it, individuals are not sure they can accomplish the task. So much has been invested in the old way that it is very difficult to acknowledge another method. As well, there is the perceived legitimacy of the old versus the unknown qualities of the new. (The important of change must be met with consensus).

Change entertained for the organization should be well thought through. Social scientists have suggested that change occurs in three stages. The first stage is initiation, in which ideas are formulated and decisions are made regarding the nature and scope of change. The second stage is implementation, in which the change is applied in the environment. During the third stage, integration, the change is stabilized in the environment.

Several points are advised for individuals seeking to be change agents. The change that is to be introduced should not be done abruptly, but rather mentioned and discussed over a period of time preceding its intended implementation. Considerable support for the change should be marshaled so that it has sufficient sustaining force within the organization. Details must be shared regarding the specific goals to be addressed by the change. (The changed must be recognized before the change actually happen).

Furthermore, when change is top-down, or driven entirely by a school principal, for example, change is viewed as a threat. Successful change comes from allowing teachers in a school to be central in the decision-making and implementation process. While studies of decentralized decision making (or site-based management) are mixed on the impact of involving teachers in management decisions, in general principle, top-down or imposed change causes more anxiety and is less effective at effecting real and significant change.

Doll (1996) discusses the process of change from three different perspectives. First, change is viewed as technical; that is, technical assistance can be employed to carefully design and implement an innovation. Second, change is political; there are special interests of individuals at work in the planning of change. Third, change is cultural; each change has the potential for disturbing or altering the cultural context. (Change comes with lots of mixed influences).

In a plan called the *research utilizing problem-solving process*, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory used a modified version of the classic five-step change process. It concentrates primarily on the initiation phase of a change process and the steps are (a) identifying a need for change, (b) diagnosing the situation in which change is to take place, (c) considering alternative courses of action, (d) testing the feasibility of a plan for change, and (e) adoption, diffusion, and adaptation for a successful change effort.

Irrespective of the chosen theory of change, school leaders must understand that certain factors can either support or stifle change. Generally, a school leader should develop a support system for change in the school environment. Teachers are the ones expected to implement innovations and sustain change; therefore, attention must be paid to them and their emotional and professional needs. In addition, there is a greater likelihood of change becoming legitimized in the school if the change is made in a non-punitive, pressure-less, supportive environment. (There must be certain steps taking place in order to see change).

## **Skill 1.2      Demonstrating knowledge of various theories of change and conflict resolution**

Principals are leaders. Their behavior and stated and implied communication have a tremendous impact on those with whom they work. Others often follow the lead of the principal. If a principal is calm in difficult situations, the students, parents, staff, and faculty will usually assume this position; the reverse is also true.

A principal who resolves conflict in a systematic, fair manner promotes this kind of behavior within the school. The means by which a principal shares information and reaches decisions are closely observed and followed.

The principal who shows partiality or insists that his or her position is the only one will not obtain meaningful input from those with whom he or she is working. Under this management style people will say what they expect the principal to say, say nothing, or agree with the principal's views. Thus the best collective thinking of the learning community is not harnessed during the planning, implementation, or evaluation of the work of the school. If the principal appears to open up discussion, others in the environment will respond accordingly. A strong principal realizes that there are times when decisions must be made and makes them in a timely fashion. For example, if a person enters the campus with a gun, the principal must take action to provide for the safety of everyone. If teachers have conflict, the principal must find means to resolve the problem before it deters the achievement of organizational goals.

## **Skill 1.3      Applying knowledge of strategies for initiating change in the educational environment**

Generally, change is desirable for growth and development; however, not all reasons for change are plausible. In many instances, the acceptance of change is dependent on concrete measures of comparison between the existing and the desired programs. Such comparison might be facilitated through the Purvus Discrepancy Evaluation Model in which program standards and performance must first be determined, then both performance and standards are compared to determine if there are discrepancies. The discrepancy between standards and performance is established throughout every aspect of the program including the design, installation, processes, products, and cost.

Change will not necessarily occur just because someone has a bright idea that may very well be beneficial to the school. Change will occur when the individuals at all levels in the organization recognize that there is a need for it. It takes effective leadership and open two-way communication to initiate the change process. Problem solving, support, and continuous assessment of the process are also important aspects of promoting change.

Understanding administrative theories of change can be very useful in the process of implementing new curriculum. Kurt Lewin's Force Field Model looks at how two groups of opposing forces, when equalized, acquire a balance or equilibrium. This model states that once unfreezing occurs, the driving force reduces the power of the restraining force thereby increasing actions to attain change. The restraining force is generally governed by fear of the unknown, strong identification with traditional values of the organization, or obsolete knowledge, which helps to maintain the status quo. The driving force is armed new knowledge, technology, societal values, processes, or institutional approval to initiate the change process.

Specific strategies for curriculum implementation, for example, depend greatly on the curriculum implementation model for change. Among these are the Organizational Resistance to Change model (ORC model), the Organizational Development model, the Organizational Parts, Units, and Loops model, and the Educational Change model.

The *ORC Model* accepts that resistance to change is natural because individuals become very comfortable with what they know and are afraid of the unknown. Therefore, they resist change in order to preserve the status quo. However, this model sees change and innovation as inevitable and essential to organizational and curriculum growth and development. The model produces a high level of success because it levels the playing field for those involved by endorsing power equalization between administrators and teachers.

**Skill 1.4      Demonstrating knowledge of how to gather support for change and build both internal and external alliances to support the change process**

Schools do not exist in a vacuum. As such, they are characterized as open systems, signifying that they are interrelated with the environments within which they exist. The external environment of schools includes parents, businesses, Taxpayers, and politicians. All of these are important to schools as their actions directly or indirectly affect the operations of a school. Legislatures, colleges, and other governmental or educational agencies increasingly influence schools. Administrators must realize that while schools cannot be all things to all constituents, schools depend upon their environment for resources and support. Hence, schools must maintain public relations campaigns regarding their effectiveness. As well, it is important for school leaders to know who possesses and exercises power in a community.

Administrators must also facilitate schools reacting to changing environmental conditions, demographics, and economic issues. For instance, changes in the job market requires the educational organization to prepare students accordingly. Accommodating these changes must be handled delicately; a school leader can expect difficulties if there is a significant departure from the standards and norms expected in the community. (Since the schools are open, they must be protected by many inside the organization).

Schools have recently needed to consider not only the immediate community, but also the broader public, governmental regulation, and the fear of declining enrollment or state take-over Federally-mandated accountability systems such as No Child Left Behind, have put governmental and public oversight into the mix. While this legislation leaves operational policies to local regulation, schools must demonstrate that they successfully prepare all students to meet achievement standards. In many ways, this federal law has encouraged schools to become more competitive with one another for students, attention, and funding.

**Skill 1.5      Demonstrating knowledge of how to articulate components of the vision and the leadership processes necessary to implement and support the vision**

In order to garner support for a plan of action, a leader must make careful plans and all actions must be attached to achievable and measurable goals and objectives. Who participates in the planning process is also crucial to receiving a quality and dynamic plan for implementation. Everyone on the team must understand the goals and objectives and they must agree upon which measures will determine successful attainment of these benchmarks. At times administrators must act before thinking; planning, however, is a commitment to think before acting. While this helps administrators avoid negative consequences there are still anticipated and unanticipated consequences to planning. This is particularly the case because planning, like decision making, often occurs in the absence of all the necessary information. In fact, the current drive for “strategic planning” has many critics arguing that too much attention on planning distracts school personnel from actually accomplishing their plans. Yet, planning is vital because no planning is worse than poor planning.

In schools, the planning function identifies long term and short term goals that move the organization from where it is to where stakeholders want it to be (Kaiser, 1996). Schools must plan for everything from student enrollments, staffing projections, curriculum needs, and the vision established by stakeholders. Administrators must increase support systems to accomplish school goals and decrease those elements that can have a negative influence on its functioning.

**Skill 1.6 Analyzing relationships between elements of the political, economic, social, cultural, and value systems of the community, the state, and the nation and the educational vision**

The school curriculum is an action plan to educate children. The aims and goals that shape education are generated from nationwide commissions and task forces comprised of educators, and other influential citizens, including politicians. An example was the 1938 report *A Nation-At-Risk* in which the Commission on Excellent in Education reported its findings on the quality of education in America and made specific recommendations. Another example is the effort made by President Bush and state governors with the Goals 2000 effort, which emerged in 1990.

At the local level, task forces of parents, educators, and community groups impact school curriculum similar to national groups. Change is affected by data including attitudinal surveys of the students, teachers, and parent and community groups. Other data sources for curriculum selection include direct student information, such as interviews and conferences. These yield information related to dispositions for learning, likes and dislikes, as well as difficulties experienced by students due to the curriculum design or related situations. Additionally, anecdotal records held by teachers and the contents of student folders, such as testing results and report cards, may contribute to the development of profiles of students to aide in the decision-making process regarding curriculum selection. Currently, curriculum selection is a result of national concerns about reading comprehension and math and science achievement, all in the name of economic competition with other countries.

Research findings about curriculum principles and design, as well as content organization, are also valuable for decision-making. Societal expectations directly impact the objectives for learning. The *Goals 2000* movement has particularly influenced the way goals are developed. Rather than stating vague ideas, educators must now provide behavioral objectives. These types of objectives are effective because they express exactly who is to achieve what and by when, thus, success can be measured. For example, Goal Four (4) of Goals 2000 states "By the year 2000, U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement." The expectations of this societal goal affected the curriculum in every state, district, and school. Even if this goal was lofty and not fully attained, it has affected the selection and content of the local curriculum.

The Commission for Goals 2000 uncovered the deplorable student achievement in math and science and by disclosing these conditions, parent, teachers, and community groups endorsed these goals as a way of improving education. Thus, the commission influenced a chain reaction where objectives were identified at the lowest levels to change the outcomes in these subject areas. As a result, subject-area goals were clearly written and became the driving force of curriculum change. The nation is also concerned with producing citizens who are prepared to transmit the ideals of a democratic society. Therefore, the school as a societal institution must include in its teaching and learning process objectives that will produce desirable learner outcomes.

### **SKILL 1.7 Identifying strategies for leading the school community in the adoption of challenging performance standards**

There are high expectations in all content areas for students in the state of Georgia. To ensure the students are successful in meeting the academic achievement goals, teachers must also be held to high standards of instruction. For most schools, this means making radical changes to their instructional practices. For administrators, attempting to change the way teachers teach and the look of their classrooms may present a real challenge. There are several reasons why teachers resist change. To compound the problem, those who have been in the profession for a while or have been at a school for a few years may be resistant to change simply if they perceive it as being the idea of a new administration. For all these reasons, principals need to be very strategic in implementing large scale changes.

An effective strategy for overcoming resistance to instructional change is to guide teachers in planning sessions. During these workshops the new, more rigorous performance standards are dissected and the staff highlights how they can implement the standards in instruction. Analysis and diagnosis of students and their data should be another focus during instructional planning. Allowing teachers to analyze test results will help them determine students' current attainment. Once instructors know where their students are currently, they can tailor lesson plans for the more challenging performance standards. As the changes are being made, success needs to be celebrated and everyone must recognize what they are doing well and honestly address shortcomings. Collaboration is still necessary but comparisons with other schools should be minimized as every school is different.

Additionally, administrators should work with teachers individually including:

- Making time to be in the classroom to help the teachers.
- Setting meetings to help teachers discuss and talk about their successes in the classroom.
- Encouraging teachers to analyze the standards so that they can easily see what the students need to learn.

One method of making sure that teachers teach the curriculum without becoming overburdened is vertical planning with colleagues, or taking a close look at the standards as they progress from one grade to another. Teachers of each grade can meet in groups to look at the standards to determine which are taught in depth in an earlier grade and which are more fully covered in later grades. This will allow the teachers to develop a list of standards that are absolutely necessary for each grade and a list of those that are stressed in another grade level.

Another strategy for helping teachers to adopt challenging performance standards is to provide professional development in planning lessons and units. If teachers plan with the end in mind, they will be able to identify what demonstrates student mastery of the specific skill taught. A third method is to use exemplars, in that way students know what demonstrates mastery.

**Skill 1.8      Demonstrating knowledge of how to align the district's educational vision and the instructional program with the policies and goals of the board of education or other governing entity**

In this age of school accountability, principals are indeed instructional leaders. They must be responsible for the quality of instruction on their campuses. While they cannot be fully responsible, as schools are made up of many professionals, they do have great influence on the instruction in each classroom. Curricular decisions are often made at the district level or within departments or committees. School leaders generally defer to the expertise of teachers or curriculum specialists; however, they can have a strong impact on procedures, standards, and outcomes. By being present, informed, and collaborative, they can help to create high-level curriculum-implementation for all classrooms.

Curriculum originates from the purposes of education that the community, board, states, or region hold dear. For example, when local stakeholders believe that all students should have strong knowledge of civic foundations, the curriculum reflects this ideal. Schools are not likely to develop curricula for academic areas that are not important to any stakeholder group. When appropriate topics are decided upon, curriculum is developed in order to organize the content into a manageable and logical progression. Curriculum is usually organized by topic areas; added to those topics are texts, outside resources, assessments, projects, and activities. Additionally, specific instructional techniques are recommended.

In most schools, the curriculum is already developed for most subjects. An individual may ask “why is curriculum still an issue, then?” Primarily because all curriculum can be improved. Most schools take it upon themselves to modify curriculum on a regular basis as they draw from previous experience on what worked and what didn’t work. Curriculum also changes when new priorities are handed down in the form of legislation. A third reason is that schools want to create a curriculum that will reflect their own individual needs, even though the basic structures may be already dictated. In such cases, pieces of the curriculum are adapted. Sources, such as conferences, books, programs, and formal interventions are helpful in creating curricula.

Instructional objectives are usually met through trial, feedback, improvement, and new knowledge. Teachers cannot improve without new ideas, practice, and advice. Principals, other teacher-leaders, instructional coaches, and mentors can provide valuable assistance to teachers as they seek to improve their practice. One-on-one coaching or mentoring is particularly effective in helping teachers to improve. Although principals can be effective at this, teachers may be more likely to trust non-evaluative staff with questions, concerns, or problems that they need addressed.

Once teachers are ready to implement a curriculum a clear progression must be made from goals to student’s current knowledge, the instructional activities, and a plan to assess learning. Diagnosis is the precursor to instruction, as teachers need to assess what students do and do not know. Then the diagnosis becomes the basis for the instructional planning. Collaborative instructional planning and decision making is typical. Continuity is built across grade levels, programs, and courses. Curriculum alignment is periodic, and staff, students, and parents know the priorities of the scope of the curriculum. The content of the curriculum is free from biases including gender, ethnic, and racial biases.

The school curriculum is in reality a plan of action to educate children. The plan includes goals and objectives, and activities and materials to support learning. The evaluation process identifies the attainment of the goals and objectives. The many approaches to curriculum are a reflection of educational philosophies, psychological foundations, and social and developmental theories. Approaches to curriculum also include viewpoints about the roles of the learners, teachers, specialists, goals and objectives, and other important content to be examined.

Curricular approaches can be technical/ scientific or non-technical/non-scientific. Among the technical/scientific approaches are specific behavioral approaches, the managerial approach, and the systems approach. Non-technical/nonscientific approaches to curriculum include the academic and humanistic approaches.

*The behavioral approach* is rooted in the scientific management theory of Frederick Taylor, which emphasized efficiency and productivity. Ralph Tyler, Franklin Babbitt, Hilda Tabba pioneered the educational application, and others is a very efficient model for school operation. It is a blueprint that includes goals, objectives, and step-by-step sequencing of content, activities, and learning outcomes. This strategy is still used in teacher lesson and unit plans.

*The managerial approach* considers the school as a social system in which students, teachers, administrators, and other members of the school community interact based on social norms. In this setting, space, schedules, and programs are important factors. While logical and sequential steps are expected, the focus is on the organizational aspect of curriculum rather than the implementation. This approach brought innovations, such as non-graded schools, departmentalization, and the homeroom concept.

*The system approach* views organizational units and sub-units as integral parts of the whole. Diagrams and flow charts are important to view the curriculum as a whole system that can be monitored. It is viewed as curriculum engineering. With this approach, individual issues are related to the whole system.

*The academic approach* is among the nonscientific/non-technical approaches to curriculum. It is philosophical and theoretical and especially concerned with broad aspects of schooling, background information, and overviews of events and people, which makes it rigid and non-practical for the classroom and schools. Nonetheless, it does reflect useful educational views for curriculum developers and theorists.

*The humanistic approach* is another non-scientific/non-technical approach rooted in the child-centered movement, which gained recognition with the growth of child psychology and humanistic psychology in the 1940s and 1950s. This approach is concerned with the social, artistic, physical, and cultural aspects of curriculum. Additionally, it is concerned with the need for self-reflection and self-actualization of the learner along with the social, psychological, and environmental dynamics of the classroom.