

AHSI School Leadership Competency Project

Research clearly defines a positive correlation between effective school leadership and enhanced student achievement (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Moreover, there appear to be specific leadership and professional competencies which correlate with principal efficacy, particularly in the alternative or at-risk setting (Gross, 1996). An examination of the interactive nature of the above underscores the need for competency-focused professional development programs that will engage principals in opportunities to build capacity in specific core competencies.

Principals in the alternative setting need ready access to professional development programs that address the complex issues of leadership in the at-risk or alternative context and that offer specific strategies for meeting a diverse array of student and teacher needs. They need time for collaborative interaction as a professional learning community to explore these issues within a safe and supportive forum, without interference from scheduling conflicts. They need professional development processes designed to scaffold principals to reach clearly defined, prioritized, competency-focused, desired results.

PROJECT GOALS:

1. Identify core competencies relevant to AHSI organization school leader success;
2. Define systems for identifying new leaders who demonstrate these specific critical competencies;
3. Create leadership development programs for building capacity in these critical attributes for in-service principals; and
4. Strengthen the emerging AHSI Professional Learning Community of alternative school leaders and their colleagues.

Desired Results:

- Increased capacity to recruit train & support school leaders
- Stronger AHSI Principal professional learning community

PARTICIPANTS: The Alternative High School Initiative (AHSI) and Communities in Schools (CIS) propose to partner with 8 other alternative high school intermediaries to launch and sustain this project. These AHSI intermediaries will be asked to choose those competency areas in which they have particular interest, experience, and expertise. Capacity-building research and module creation will be shared between participants accordingly.

MODULE DESIGN AND COMPONENTS: Each module would follow a prescribed format and would contain 5 components: A Power Point presentation, Participant manual, Trainer manual, Webcast/Webinar and Video presentation. These will be developed in two phases. The PowerPoint and manuals would be created during phase one; these would then be field tested. Their purpose would be to provide relevant and consistent professional development opportunities for AHSI school leaders, and would be designed to enhance leader capacity in one or more of the core competencies. Phase two, to be implemented after June 2009, would allow the modules to be readily deployable across the national network of 242+ alternative schools and beyond. Particular attention would be given to creating PD programs that encourage principal reflection, collaboration and real-world application. These appear to be key factors for maximizing principal engagement and for cultivating professional and personal growth, which leads to changes in practice and outcome.

AHSI partners identified the following eight core competencies critical to effective AHSI school leadership:

1. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning
2. Creating & Sustaining Strong Relationships Across School Culture
3. Stimulating a Culture of Data Driven Decision Making & Continuous Improvement
Action Research Projects
4. Academic Leadership
5. Collaborative Leadership
6. Crisis Management
7. The Character of Leadership
8. Systemic Thinking




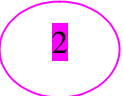
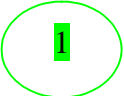
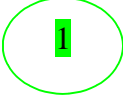

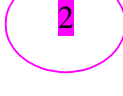



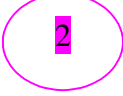

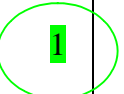


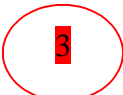
Next Steps

The next step is to create the first three modules using the core competencies to drive the content. Communities in Schools (CIS) brings expertise and experience through creation of similar training modules (around other topics) for use across their own network. These will provide a framework for and contribute to the success of this project going forward.

The first on-site meeting of the Module Development Committees was held on Thursday, October 16, 2008 at the AHSI Fall Convening in Houston. Semi-monthly check-in meetings will be held via audio conference November – March, until DRAFT guides and power point presentations for modules 1-3 are completed and ready for Beta Testing. CIS has identified a leader of leaders group (5-7 CIS principals) and have offered their participation and critical feedback in initial Beta testing of modules 1-3 during February and March of 2009.

AHSI Core Competency Research Table

This table aligns the 8 AHSI Core Competencies with specific competency literature. Three guiding articles are referenced and each AHSI competency is verified within these articles. To facilitate your review of this alignment, each AHSI Leadership Competency is assigned a number and a color. To track each competency within the articles referenced in the first three columns, look for a circle with the AHSI competency number and color. Those circles are placed in cells where the AHSI construct is identified in the article named at the top of the column.

New Leaders for New Schools Selection Criteria	Boston School Leadership Institute Competencies of Effective Principals	Survey of 257 Public School Superintendents 1996 (Priority Order)	AHSI Survey & Merged Competencies Cross – Referenced Construct KEY
<p>1. Belief in the Potential of All Children to Excel Academically</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believe each and every child can excel academically • Take personal responsibility for ensuring high academic achievement for every child • Demonstrate the personal drive and commitment to eliminate the disparity of educational quality that exists <p> </p>	<p>1. Understand how children and adults learn.</p> <p> </p>	<p>School Climate</p> <p></p>	<p>Understanding Poverty & Issues of Social Justice</p> <p>Creating Inclusive School Culture</p> <p></p>
<p>2. Commitment to Ongoing Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek feedback and reflect on experiences to grow and develop • Demonstrate humility and willingness to continually improve • Commit to the coaching and the development of adults <p> </p>	<p>2. Analyze instruction and student learning through regular classroom observations and provide detailed feedback to teachers that supports instructional improvement.</p> <p></p>	<p>Interpersonal Relationships</p> <p> </p>	<p>Collaborative Leadership</p> <p>Visionary Leadership</p> <p>Creating a Professional Learning Community</p> <p></p>
<p>3. Communication and Listening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possess written and verbal skills to communicate with clarity, conciseness, and appropriateness to multiple audiences • Demonstrate poise and professionalism in diverse situations • Listen actively <p> </p>	<p>3. Use data to measure student learning, instructional improvement and to drive planning.</p> <p></p>	<p>Communications</p> <p></p>	<p>Problem Solving</p> <p>Courage Under Fire</p> <p>Crisis Management</p> <p></p>

<p>4. Interpersonal Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build successful one-on-one relationships • Value each person's perspective and treat people with respect • Relate to adults and children: understand where they are coming from, what they need, and how to meet their needs • Diffuse anger and find common ground to move people towards solutions • Exhibit confidence and competence under pressure <p>1 3</p>	<p>4. Create a school community that is devoted to social justice, high expectations for all, and equity in students' opportunity to learn.</p> <p>1</p>	<p>Planning & Decision Making</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Systemic Thinking</p> <p>Strategic Planning</p> <p>Resource Mgmt Organizational Development</p> <p>4</p>
<p>5. Knowledge of Teaching and Learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify exemplary teaching • Provide feedback and guidance to improve instructional strategies • Enable students to attain results despite significant challenges <p>6</p>	<p>5. Understand the achievement gap and implement explicit strategies to close the gap.</p> <p>1 6</p>	<p>Instruction & Curriculum</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Counseling Communications Relationship Building Heart for Students and Teachers</p> <p>5</p>
<p>6. Problem Solving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work proactively to solve problems and reach effective solutions • Analyze and diagnose complex issues to develop strategic plan • Identify concrete outcomes as a way to evaluate results <p>3</p>	<p>6. Develop and communicate a shared vision and common understanding of effective classrooms and instruction and organize the school on it.</p> <p>6 2</p>	<p>Staff Development & Evaluation</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Academic Leadership Core Knowledge and Experience</p> <p>Staff Development & Evaluation Demonstrate & Model Educational Best Practice</p> <p>6</p>
<p>7. Project Management to Deliver Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate a clear vision, set agenda, and implement goals • Select, prioritize, and communicate strategies effectively to reach goals • Balance day-to-day tasks and urgent needs with progress towards goals • Delegate decision-making and authority in responsible manner <p>4</p>	<p>7. Create a collegial environment in which leadership is shared, professional practice is made public, risk-taking and innovation are supported, and consistent, high-quality instruction is paramount.</p> <p>2</p>	<p>Resource Management</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Personality Character Traits Integrity Flexibility Sense of Humor Optimism</p> <p>7</p>

<p>8. Self-Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify accurately personal strengths and areas for support Demonstrate integrity Understand how you are perceived by and impact others <p>7 5 2</p>	<p>8. Understand the needs and assets students, parents and the community bring to schools and build strong relationships with all constituents</p> <p>5 1</p>	<p>Community Support</p> <p>2</p>	<p>Stimulate Culture of Data Driven Decision Making & Continuous Improvement</p> <p>Guide Action Research Projects</p> <p>8</p>
<p>9. Team Building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate effectively Read group dynamics accurately Mobilize adults to take action and hold them accountable for reaching common goals Engage and empower others to take responsibility in decision-making to achieve results <p>2</p>	<p>9. Use the school budget, human resource functions, and other resources strategically to support improved student learning</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Building Operations</p> <p>4</p>	
<p>10. Unyielding Focus on Goals and Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confront difficult situations head-on and implement diverse solutions to get results Achieve results despite obstacles by demonstrating persistence, determination, and relentless drive Exhibit resilience to persevere and overcome setbacks Take personal responsibility for finding solutions when faced with challenges Be decisive and hold people to core values when it counts <p>3 2</p>	<p>10. Develop and maintain a safe and disciplined learning environment and manage building operations in support of student learning</p> <p>4</p>		
	<p>11. Reflect on practice and continually refine leadership, based on learning and experience.</p> <p>8</p>		