

Chapter 3

Uplifting Leadership to Support Strategic Plan Implementation

Sharon Wilbur

University of Oklahoma, USA


Sharon Dean

University of Oklahoma, USA

Stephanie Hyder

University of Oklahoma, USA

Brandy Peters

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8526-6518>
Duncan Public Schools, USA

Christiana Horn

University of Oklahoma, USA

ABSTRACT

This case study examines how uplifting leadership by the superintendent of one rural school district utilized various structures and processes to successfully implement the first year of their district strategic plan. The study is framed around the literature on change theory and the literature on uplifting leadership. Interviews with goal area team leaders, building principals, district leadership, and school board members yielded various leadership characteristics, structures, and processes that resulted in successful implementation of year one of the district's strategic plan. The interdependence of uplifting leadership with supportive structures and processes were examined as pivotal to the district's successful implementation.

PURPOSE

As schools strive to meet state and federal mandates, many districts embark on a district strategic planning process as an avenue for change. During times of large scale, second order change (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003) leadership quality becomes second only to teacher quality (Bredeson & Kelley, 2014). As effective implementation relies more heavily upon supportive leadership that provides for physical, structural, and cultural conditions conducive to change (Huffman & Hipp, 2001). However, a shift in leadership style may be necessary to support district-wide change. This case study examines the role of a superintendent's leadership and how the leadership style promoted the necessary change to achieve the district's five-year strategic plan.

The research questions for the study are:

1. What characteristics in leadership were seen as “push” forces?
2. What characteristics in leadership were seen as “pull” forces?
3. What leadership structures and processes supported implementation of change?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Change Theory

According to Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003), there are two types of change: first order and second order. Change happens at the individual level (Hord & Hall, 2014), with each person responding differently to a new initiative. First order change is change that aligns with the current values, resources, and knowledge, whereas large scale or second order change requires individuals to learn new approaches and presents a conflict with prevailing values and norms (Waters et al., 2003). These new approaches and beliefs are often accompanied by a sort of “grieving period” as participants leave behind old ways of doing and thinking and move toward new learning and commitments (Hargreaves, Boyle, & Harris, 2014). Second order change innovations live or die by the quality of support that implementers receive during the change process (Hargreaves et al., 2014).

Second order change requires different leadership responsibilities than incremental or first order change (Waters et al., 2003). Leaders act as change agents when they are able to engage people in facing realities and then in changing the priorities, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to thrive during implementation (Heifetz, 2009). These leaders help implementers understand change from a larger perspective in part through their understanding of the what, why, and stakeholder roles (Zuckerman, Wilcox, Schiller, & Durand, 2018). Schools that are able to make changes, even in the face of overwhelming odds, address the personal emotional needs of teachers while also holding high expectations for everyone (Hargreaves et al., 2014). According to Fullan (2006), school leaders use a tight and loose leadership style to handle change, much like the push and pull forces of uplifting leadership.

12 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/uplifting-leadership-to-support-strategic-plan-implementation/233704

Related Content

The Role of Teachers and School Leaders in K-12 School Violence

Renee D. Lamphere and Kweilin T. Lucas (2021). *Research Anthology on School Shootings, Peer Victimization, and Solutions for Building Safer Educational Institutions* (pp. 337-357).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-role-of-teachers-and-school-leaders-in-k-12-school-violence/263475

Delphi Technique in the Development of Emerging Contents in High School Science Curriculum

Michael Bobias Cahapay (2020). *International Journal of Curriculum Development and Learning Measurement* (pp. 1-9).

www.irma-international.org/article/delphi-technique-in-the-development-of-emerging-contents-in-high-school-science-curriculum/260744

Taboos and Storytelling for Teaching and Learning in Zimbabwe: Curriculum Decolonization in Africa

Pindai Mangwanindichero Sithole and Beatrice Maupa Bondai (2020). *International Journal of Curriculum Development and Learning Measurement* (pp. 53-65).

www.irma-international.org/article/taboo-and-storytelling-for-teaching-and-learning-in-zimbabwe/260747

Creating Praxis for Pre-Service Teachers: Developing Critical Consciousness Through Book Clubs

Allison Ivey and Julie L. Begbie (2021). *Handbook of Research on Teaching Diverse Youth Literature to Pre-Service Professionals* (pp. 339-358).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/creating-praxis-for-pre-service-teachers/285159

What Can Data Tell Us?: Using Classroom Data to Determine Student Engagement

Kelly M. Torres and Aubrey Statti (2023). *International Journal of Curriculum Development and Learning Measurement* (pp. 1-13).

www.irma-international.org/article/what-can-data-tell-us/320219