

Chapter 9

Aristeia Leadership

Stefanos P. Gialamas

*American Community Schools (ACS) Athens,
Greece*

Abour H. Cherif

*American Association of University
Administrators, USA*

Peggy Pelonis

*American Community Schools (ACS) Athens,
Greece*

Steven Medeiros

*American Community Schools (ACS) Athens,
Greece*

ABSTRACT

This chapter will present the second component of the gMp, that is, the Aristeia leadership defined as a continuous act of effectively engaging all members of an organization, or community, as well as utilizing their differences, their authentic energies, creative ideas, and diverse qualities primarily for the benefit of their constituencies. The catalyst for implementing the aforementioned is the institutional leader, who should possess all the necessary skills to support, promote and foster a culture of innovation within the institution. The Aristeia Leadership approach is defined by its three essential components (a) the establishment of an Authentic Leadership Identity (ALI), (b) the creation of a Collective Leadership-Partnership Approach (CPA) and (c) Serving Humanity (Gialamas, Pelonis, & Medeiros, 2014; Gialamas & Avgerinou, 2015).

INTRODUCTION

Most humans by nature resist change, especially when a prevailing culture or environment exists. That culture communicates a crucial message to all its members and that is that the status quo is accepted and encouraged.

Usually those within an organization who adopt a change paradigm make their decision to do so without the benefit of objective evidence, because there isn't any at that time. They take a chance by pushing for a new view. Often the paradigm of change begins while the prevailing view is still successful, which makes it difficult for most employees within an organization to actually see a shift in the corporate view coming. Some organizations are so entrenched in their ways that the only way they can effect major change is to bring in an outsider who is not party to the prevailing way of doing business.

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Within organizations there can be two very different responses to change or innovation. Change that enhances the prevailing views is readily accepted and strongly supported. Change that challenges the prevailing views is often resisted with vigour because that change could potentially destroy the old investment. People become invested in the way things are and experience fear, anxiety and insecurity when things change because of uncertainty about how things will be for them.

Senge et al. (1999) in their book *The Dance of Change* identified distinct forces that people working to improve or change organizations must deal with. The early challenges include *not enough time* and *no help*. Once some success has been achieved, challenges include *fear and anxiety*; *assessment and measurement*, and *believers and nonbelievers*. The final challenges come into play when people begin to rethink and redesign the organization as a whole: *governance*, *diffusion*, and *strategies and purpose*. Sustainable change amidst these challenges requires partnerships among different types of leaders, and requires what some call continuous *organizational learning*. Organizational learning embraces an atmosphere of experimentation and continuous improvement.

This chapter is organized into four themes with a general focus on leadership: Foundation and Evolution of Aristeia Leadership, Aristeia Leadership, Qualities of a Good Leader, and Aristeia Leadership at ACS Athens. Through these four themes we are planning to show that fostering such leadership potential, professional development activities are necessary and must focus on collaborative learning and sharing.

FOUNDATION AND EVOLUTION OF ARISTEIA LEADERSHIP

Leadership as a partnership with bounded flexibility (Gialamas, 2005) is the conceptual foundation for Aristeia (Αριστεία) Leadership. In this leadership approach, the leader and the team members establish a partnership, which is based on accountability, authority, and decision-making. The flexibility component allows the leader and the team members to adjust occasionally the accountabilities, and the level and spectrum of authority. This partnership is defined vertically and horizontally in the organization. To adopt such a leadership approach, the team leader and the team members together must shape the vision and values of the department, and/or the organization, establish the right to disagree, have joint accountability and be honest.

Kouzes and Posner (2002) identify essential characteristics of leadership. From their research including over 1200 interviews and surveys of executives' *personal-best leadership experiences*, Kouzes and Posner formulate five essential aspects of effective leadership, namely, Challenging the Process; Inspiring a Shared Vision; Enabling Others to Act; Modeling the Way; and Encouraging the Heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

Challenging the Process

Leaders search for challenging opportunities to change, grow, innovate and improve. They see their jobs as an adventure and make a habit of questioning the status quo. Leaders also find ways to motivate their followers to look for new ideas, seek out opportunities, and renew themselves individually and in teams. In doing so, they see all the people who work with them regardless of their occupations, as stakeholders and partners with valuable contributions in the successful accomplishment of the mission, the value, and the goals that have been identified and established for the institution.

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