

Critical Leadership Questions for Inspiring Schoolwide Excellence

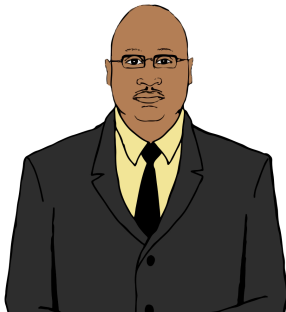
(The Principal 50)

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How often do I study my “game film” and “replays?”





In what ways does my leadership *inspire* school-wide excellence?



Toward *inspiring* school-wide excellence:

Why do I lead and what drives my decision making?
Who are we as a school?
Is our school climate and culture conducive to high academic performance?
Are the relationships in my school conducive to high academic performance?
What is the evidence that my leadership directly impacts instruction, learning and achievement?
Is failure an option in my school?
How are we going to get to our destination?
Am I growing as the school instructional leader?
How am I preparing my staff for the 21st Century child?
Have I made parental & community engagement a school priority?

Why do I lead and what drives my decision-making?
(The Attitude of the Leadership)



Why do I lead and what drives my decision-making?
(The Attitude of the Leadership)

Do I lead with a definite purpose which drives everything I say and everything I do?
Do I aim to be intentional about what I do as a leader?
Do I treat my leadership not as a job, profession or career, but as a mission?
Do I have a vision of what I expect my students to achieve?
Do I see myself as the number one determinant of the success or failure of my students?

Who are we as a school?
(School Brand)



SCHOOL BRAND

The School's Identity

Who are we as a school? (School Brand)

- Do I engage my staff in discussions about our school brand?
- Do I ensure that my staff contributes to the development of my school's core beliefs, values and guiding principles?
- Do I ensure that my staff contributes to the development of my school's purpose, mission and vision?
- Do I have high standards and expectations for all of my students, and do I believe that they will reach them?
- Do I regularly reinforce the notion that my students will succeed because they are enrolled in my school?

Your School's BRAND Matters!



Your School's BRAND Determines Outcomes

Your school's brand is comprised *minimally* of the following:

- Your School's Core Beliefs
- Your School's Core Values
- Your School's Core Guiding Principles
- Your School's Purpose
- Your School's Mission
- Your School's Vision

Your School's BRAND Determines Outcomes

What are my school's *core beliefs* relative to the practice of teaching and the process of learning?

What are my school's *core values* relative to the children we serve?

What are my school's *core guiding principles* relative to our practices as educators?

Why does my school do this? (*purpose*)

What is my school about? (*mission*)

Where is my school going? (*vision*)

Your School's BRAND Determines Outcomes

As a school / team:

How bad do we want to get there? (Passion)

How will we get there? (Plan)

What is our "BIG IDEA?" (Standard)

How often will we take the time to Reflect?

How often will we take the time to Assess?

How often will we take the time to Adjust?

Is our school climate and culture conducive to high academic performance?
(School Climate and Culture)



Climate - *The School's MOOD*

Culture - *The School's LIFESTYLE*

School Climate and Culture are a Reflection of the School's Leadership



Is our school climate and culture conducive to high academic performance?
(School Climate and Culture)

- Do I greet my students individually as they are arriving to school in the morning?
- Do I set the tone for my school at the start of each day through positive, motivating and uplifting morning announcements?
- Do I consistently strive to keep my staff and students motivated and excited about learning?
- Do I ensure that my overall school environment is conducive to learning?
- Do I ensure that each of my classroom learning environments are conducive to learning?

Is our school climate and culture conducive to high academic performance?
(The Principal in Action)

First day of school "family" meeting
Weekly, monthly, quarterly school-wide "family" meetings
Greeting students as they arrive to school in the morning
Student morning announcements
Principals morning message
High visibility in halls and cafeteria
Classroom visits
"Nip it in the Bud" announcements
End of the day announcements
Student dismissal

Is our school climate and culture conducive to high academic performance?
(School Family)

Creating a sense of family within the entire school community
Being accessible, resourceful and supportive to all
Knowing, valuing and empowering all students and staff
Always looking for "excuses" to celebrate all students and staff
Encouraging and supporting all student activities
Young Men's / Young Women's Empowerment Program
Making parent and community involvement a priority
Visibility in the students' neighborhoods
"Hyping" the school
Being an ongoing source of encouragement and inspiration

Is our school climate and culture conducive to high academic performance?
(Outside Grounds)

Well maintained
Grounds clean
No graffiti
No missing or broken letters on sign
Marquee current

Is our school climate and culture conducive to high academic performance?
(Front Lobby)

Clean environment
Floors shining
Windows spotless
Walls painted
Receptionist / security who welcome and respect visitors
Minimal noise and minimal traffic
The mission and vision of the principal are evident!

Is our school climate and culture conducive to high academic performance?
(Hallways)

- Painted walls and stairwells
- Motivational quotes posted
- Posters of historical images that reflect the student population
- Motto, mission, vision and objectives posted
- Academic excellence criteria posted
- Hallway expectations of students posted
- Dress code posted
- Clean halls and stairwells
- Shining floors
- Student work samples posted
- Photos of students posted
- The mission and vision of the principal are evident!

Is our school climate and culture conducive to high academic performance?
(Classrooms)

- Walls painted
- Clean floors
- Motto, mission, vision and objectives posted
- Academic excellence criteria posted
- Student goals (and strategies) posted
- Classroom expectations of students posted
- Homework criteria posted
- Dress code posted
- Student work samples posted
- Subject-specific material posted (print rich)
- Motivational quotes posted
- Posters of historical images that reflect the students posted

Are the relationships in my school conducive to high academic performance?
(Building Collegial Relationships)



Are the relationships in my school conducive to high academic performance?
(Building Collegial Relationships)

- Do I maintain a collegial relationship with my staff as it relates to improvement in instruction?
- Do I ensure that my new teachers are paired with competent veteran teachers?
- Do I encourage my veteran teachers to observe the instruction of my new teachers and vice versa?
- Do I participate in staff team meetings and provide input and leadership where warranted?
- Do I demonstrate an appreciation and respect for my staff?

What is the evidence that I am the instructional leader of my school?
(Instructional Leadership)



What is the evidence that my leadership directly impacts instruction, learning and achievement?
(Instructional Leadership)

Do I have a philosophy, beliefs, opinions and ideas about how children learn based upon my own research, reading and experiences?

Do I understand that my main priority is student achievement and the continued improvement of instruction?

Do I spend the majority of my time in classrooms *everyday* observing instruction and learning?

Do I ensure that my staff utilizes a variety of instructional strategies in an effort to address the different learning styles, ability levels and needs of my students in student-centered, culturally responsive learning environments?

Do I provide immediate feedback to my staff after observing their instruction via utilization of a clinical model of supervision?

Is failure an option in my school?
(Accountability and Responsibility)



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(Accountability and Responsibility)

Do I hold my teachers accountable for ensuring that all of my students strive to achieve academic excellence, which includes meeting and/or exceeding district, state and federally-mandated benchmarks?

Do I refuse to accept failure, make excuses for failure or allow failure to occur in my school?

Do I accept responsibility and accountability for student success and failure?

Do I model what I expect of my students and staff?

Do I conduct daily self-reflections and self assessments of my leadership?

How are we going to get to our destination?
(Planning, Organization and Time Management)



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(Planning, Organization and Time Management)

- Do I plan each day thoroughly while adhering to my own written plan of action for student success?
- Do I ensure that I am well organized relative to my daily routine of observing instruction and learning?
- Do I strive to empower my staff through involving them in school-level planning and decision-making?
- Do I utilize data to drive instructional decision-making?
- Do I ensure that I am well versed in my district curriculum, state content standards and state assessment specifications, and ensure full infusion into lesson plan development?

Am I growing as the school instructional leader?
(Professional Development for the Leader)



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(Professional Development for the Leader)

- Do I read professional development literature on the latest research in instructional leadership?
- Do I attend professional development conferences and workshops addressing instructional leadership?
- Do I belong to professional associations?
- Do I confer with colleagues and other educational leaders toward my own professional growth and development as an instructional leader?
- Do I and members of my staff visit schools with successful instructional programs?

**How am I preparing my staff
for the 21st Century child?**
(Professional Development for Staff)



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for the 21st Century child?**
(Professional Development for Staff)

- Do I provide ongoing professional development for my staff?
- Do I utilize staff meeting time for staff professional development?
- Do I engage all staff during professional development staff meetings?
- Do I regularly educate my staff through providing professional literature?
- Do I engage my staff in book talks on topics pertaining to improvement in instruction?

**Have I made parental and community engagement a
school priority?**
(Parental and Community Engagement)



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school priority?**
(Parental and Community Engagement)

- Do I make parental and community engagement a *priority* in my practice as a school leader?
- Do I ensure that parents and community members feel welcome whenever they visit my school?
- Do I utilize parents and community members in the programs and activities that we have at my school?
- Do I aim to be accessible to parents and community members?
- Do I aim to be receptive to input and ideas from parents and community members?



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Principal Kafele Books (ASCD)

- The Teacher 50 (coming September 1)*
- The Principal 50*
- Closing the Attitude Gap*
- Motivating Black Males*
