Evidence Review:
Leaders in high-performing schools devote considerable energy to the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996, p. 10). On the development end of the continuum, leaders ensure that the vision and mission of the school are crafted with and among stakeholders. They also ensure that a variety of sources of data that illuminate student learning are used in the forging of vision and goals. In particular, they make certain that (a) assessment data related to student learning, (b) demographic data pertaining to students and the community, and (c) information on patterns of opportunity to learn are featured in the development process.

Effective leaders facilitate the creation of a school vision that reflects high and appropriate standards of learning, a belief in the educability of all students, and high levels of personal and organizational performance. They emphasize ambitious goals, ones that call for improvement over the status quo. In particular, leadership for school improvement means making certain that goals are focused on students, feature student learning and achievement, and are clearly defined. Learning-focused leaders ensure that responsibility for achieving targets are made explicit and that timelines for achieving objectives are specified. In short, they make sure that the school vision is translated into specific and measurable end results. They also ensure that the resources needed to meet goals are clearly identified and made available to the school community.

Effective principals and other school-based leaders articulate the vision through personal modeling and by communicating with others in and around the organization. On the first front, they are adept at making the school vision central to their own daily work. They demonstrate through their actions the organization’s commitment to the values and beliefs at the heart of the mission as well as to the specific activities needed to reach goals. On the second issue, communication, learning-focused leaders work ceaselessly to promote the school’s mission and agenda to staff, students, parents, and members of the extended school community (e.g., business and religious leaders, district office staff). Indeed, effective leaders are masters in keeping vision, mission, and goals in the forefront of everyone’s attention and at the center of everyone’s work. To accomplish this, they engage a wide array of formal and informal avenues of exchange and employ a variety of techniques (e.g., symbols, ceremonies).

Master leaders are especially well versed at translating vision into operation and at stewarding the school’s vision. They are careful monitors, (a) ensuring a continuous examination of assumptions, beliefs, and values, (b) assessing implementation of goals, and (c) evaluating the impact of school objectives on organizational performance and student learning. One way these leaders shepherd goals is through the actions they take to recognize, celebrate, and reward the contributions of community members to the development, the implementation, and, most importantly, the realization of school goals. At the same time, they do not overlook shortcomings and failures. Certainly a critical dimension of operationalizing and stewarding is seeing to it that school vision and school goals shape routine school activities and anchor organizational systems and structures. On a personal front, operationalizing and shepherding occurs when leaders act as keepers and promoters of the vision; maintain enthusiasm and a sense of optimism, especially in
periods of waning energy; and inspire others to break through barriers to make the school vision a reality.


Evidence Review:

Research and experience indicate that successful turnaround leaders typically begin their change efforts by articulating a clear and compelling vision for the future of the organization. Turnaround principals should make their goals and expectations clear from the start of the year by creating a vivid picture of what success will look like and what it will mean long-term for children. In a school that has been failing for years, staff members may not remember or believe that student learning success is possible. The leader’s vision includes committing to bold, specific learning goals for students— not merely promising that the school will “improve” or students will benefit from a new strategy or program.

As part of this vision, principals should clearly describe the specific steps staff members must take to achieve the new goals. Successful turnaround principals reform their schools in the interest of students, not adults, and many changes may involve behaviors that are difficult or unfamiliar to staff. Being very specific about required steps and the necessary actions to carry them out helps capable staff members make the change, and puts those who do not change on notice.

Turnaround principals should also make clear that the changes that will be required to carry out their vision are not optional. Staff members should know that they will not be permitted to “fly below the radar” to avoid making uncomfortable changes. Some staff members may be skeptical or take a few weeks to buy into the vision and may require encouragement and support during that time. Others will resist change consistently, or attempt to perpetuate the status quo while they wait out this wave of reforms. Turnaround principals can spur desirable departures among these staff members by remaining committed to their vision and the new behaviors expected of staff. Leaders may also candidly suggest that these staff members might be more comfortable and perhaps more successful in a different school environment.


Evidence Review:

In successful turnarounds, leaders use influence to win the support of both staff and external stakeholders for the changes the organization needs. Several leader actions fall under this influence category. The first is communicating a positive vision for future results (Almanzán, 2005; Beer & Nohria, 2000; Beer et al., 1990; Blankstein & Cocozzella, 2004; Charles A. Dana Center, 1999; Duke et al., 2005; Gadiesh et al., 2003; Galvin & Parsley, 2005; Garvin & Roberto, 2005; Hamel, 2000; Heimbouch, 2000; Hirschhorn, 2002; Hoffman, 1989; Joyce, 2004; Kim & Mauborgne, 2003; Kotter, 1995; Meliones, 2000; Mullen & Patrick, 2000; Olson, 1999; Parcells, 2000; Pascale et al., 1997; Paton & Mordaunt, 2004; Walshe et al., 2004; Waters et al., 2003; Werkema & Case, 2005; Wilms et al., 1994). Participants in persistently failing organizations have often come to believe that the low-performing status quo is inevitable; it becomes essential for the leader to put forward a positive vision of what might be.
A second critical leader action in this category is helping staff personally see and feel the problems their “customers” face. (Almanzán, 2005; Beer, Eisenstat, & Spector, 1990; Charles A. Dana Center, 1999; Doherty & Abernathy, 1998; Duke et al., 2005; Galvin & Parsley, 2005; Garvin & Roberto, 2005; Heimbouch, 2000; Joyce, 2004; Kanter, 2003; Kim & Mauborgne, 2003; Kotter, 1995; Meliones, 2000; Mordaunt & Cornforth, 2004; Olson, 1999; Parcells, 2000; Paton & Mordaunt, 2004; Paul, 2005; Walshe et al., 2004; Werkema & Case, 2005; Wilms et al., 1994).

In New York City, Bill Bratton dealt with this problem by putting key managers in the transit police face to face with the daily problems that plagued the department, so that they could not deny the reality of failure. Transit officers were asked to ride the subways that their constituents feared. This encouraged employees to see the customers’ perspective and become part of the solution rather than deflecting criticism they felt was directed at them (Kim & Mauborgne, 2003). A turnaround principal reported accomplishing this by challenging her teachers to look at their class lists before the school year started and identify the students they did not think they could teach how to read. The principal reported that she leveled this challenge to help the teachers see the effect they can have on students and communicate her expectations. At the same time, she committed to providing the teachers with the support they would need to succeed. Teachers reported that this simple question was extremely potent and stuck with them long after the faculty meeting (Almanzán, 2005).

Another key action is getting key influencers to support change (Almanzán, 2005; Appel, 2005; Boyne, 2004; Brenneman, 1998; Buchanan, 2003; Charles A. Dana Center, 1999; Duke et al., 2005; Galvin & Parsley, 2005; Garvin & Roberto, 2005; Hamel, 2000; Heimbouch, 2000; Hirschhorn, 2002; Kanter, 2003; Kim & Mauborgne, 2003; Kotter, 1995; Meliones, 2000; Mordaunt & Cornforth, 2004; Mullen & Patrick, 2000; Olson, 1999; Pascale et al., 1997; Paton & Mordaunt, 2004; Teerlink & Ozley, 2000; Walshe et al., 2004; Waters et al., 2003; Werkema & Case, 2005; Wilms et al., 1994). Research has shown that during the implementation phase of a turnaround, for example, successful organizations frequently develop turnaround campaigns to ensure that restructuring takes place in an environment that is receptive to change (Garvin & Roberto, 2005; Hirschhorn, 2002; Kim & Mauborgne, 2003; Kotter, 1995). Such a campaign is built on clear goals, employee input, and transparency in the change process, as Garvin and Roberto (2005) found in their analysis of the turnaround at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. There, the turnaround leader engaged in significant work up front to persuade the current employees to support his plans for change, making them more likely to listen to bad news, question the status quo, and consider new ways of working in the organization. In his analysis of turning around institutions of higher education, Paul (2005) identified the importance of acknowledging the crisis as a critical aspect of convincing employees to change. A related action is silencing change naysayers indirectly by showing speedy successes (Almanzán, 2005; Charles A. Dana Center, 1999; Duke et al., 2005; Galvin & Parsley, 2005; Garvin & Roberto, 2005; Hamel, 2000; Kim & Mauborgne, 2003; Meliones, 2000; Pascale et al., 1997; Paton & Mordaunt, 2004; Walshe et al., 2004; Werkema & Case, 2005; Wilms et al., 1994). As discussed above, early, tangible wins are a hallmark of many successful turnarounds.

One of the reasons, it seems, is that early victories make it difficult for opponents of change to gain traction. Successful turnarounds are typically marked by measuring and reporting data frequently and publicly (Beer et al., 1990; Brenneman, 1998; Buchanan, 2003; Charles A. Dana Center, 1999; Duke et al., 2005; Fullan, 2005; Gadiesh, Pace, & Rogers, 2003; Galvin & Parsley, 2005; Gibson & Billings, 2003; Joyce, 2004; Kanter, 2003; Kim & Mauborgne, 2003; Meliones, 2000; Mullen & Patrick, 2000; Pascale et al., 1997; Paton & Mordaunt, 2004; Rhim, 2004, 2005b; Walshe et al., 2004; Werkema & Case, 2005; Wilms et al., 1994). In the Duke Hospital...
turnaround, for example, the organization introduced systems to share information across teams about the organization’s bottom line—financial performance. This sharing of information helped drive home the reality that while financial results were not the organization’s central goal, the organization could not fulfill its social purpose without managing its bottom line (i.e., no margin; no mission, Meliones, 2000). Multiple principals in successful school turnarounds identified sharing data on a regular basis as a key means to identify practices that were working well, and alternatively, those that were not working. Rather than regarding the sharing of data as a means to criticize or punish, teachers reportedly grew to depend upon open discussions about data as a key means to improve their practices (Charles A. Dana Center, 1999; Duke et al., 2005).

One specific tactic in this category is gathering staff in frequent open-air meetings, requiring all involved in decision-making to disclose results and problem solve (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Beer et al., 1990; Buchanan, 2003; Charles A. Dana Center, 1999; Doherty, & Abernathy, 1998; Duke et al., 2005; Galvin & Parsley, 2005; Joyce, 2004; Kanter, 2003; Kim & Mauborgne, 2003; Kotter, 1995; Meliones, 2000; Mullen & Patrick, 2000; Pascale et al., 1997; Walshe et al., 2004; Wilms et al., 1994). Bratton et al. (2003) at Baskin Elementary School in Texas, teachers and administrators credit regular public conversations about classroom practice and student achievement with changing organizational norms and practices. The teachers plan together and share ideas as well as resources. They also visit one another’s classrooms to ask questions and offer advice (Charles A. Dana Center, 1999).


References and resources:


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From the *Georgia School Performance Standards*
When translating your rubric score to the Assessment process, please note that Level 1 = No Development, Level 2 = Limited Development and Levels 3 & 4 = Fully Implemented

**PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION**
The processes, procedures, structures, and products that focus the operations of a school on ensuring high levels of learning for all students

Planning and Organization Standard 1: Shares a common vision and mission that define the school culture and guide the continuous improvement process

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<tr>
<th>Full Implementation</th>
<th>Limited</th>
<th>No Development</th>
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<td>Level 4 □ Exemplary</td>
<td>Level 3 □ Operational</td>
<td>Level 2 □ Emerging</td>
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A common vision and mission have been collaboratively developed and communicated to nearly all stakeholders.

The culture of the school has been deeply defined over time by the vision and mission, which are updated as needed.

The daily work and practices of staff consistently demonstrate a sustained commitment to continuous improvement.

A common vision and mission have been developed through a collaborative process and communicated to most stakeholders. The vision and mission define the culture of the school and guide the continuous improvement process.

A common vision and mission have been developed by some staff members but have not been effectively communicated so that they guide the continuous improvement process.

A common vision and mission have not been developed or updated or have been developed by a few staff members.

**Examples of Evidence**
- A collaboratively created Vision/Mission is visible throughout the school and is reviewed on an annual basis
- Sign-in sheets reflect leaders are actively participating in professional learning, collaborative planning, team/grade level meetings, etc.
• School Improvement Process is utilized to make informed decisions that support the vision/mission of the school