

Growth Mindset Thinkers

Video: Leadership Visioning

Too many people in the education system think of themselves as administrators, not as leaders. And that's a huge -- that's a mind shift. So that says, If I'm the principal, I'm the administrator. So what do I do? I've got to make sure I have teachers for fill-in when somebody is sick or away. I've got to get the budget. I've got to make sure that the -- you know, that the janitors are doing what they're doing. I've got paperwork. I've got this, I've got that. And that's an administrator job. But if a teach -- if the principal thinks of himself as a leader, they would say, "What is this school, this community, these teachers, this group of kids ... what should it mean in their lives? And how can we make this school mean something in their lives?" We need to have a vision of the school that says this is what the school is. Kids are coming from all kinds of different backgrounds, different experiences; they're going to go somewhere else. What is it? What this school -- what does this school really mean?

That becomes a lead school. And what happens is kids will see leadership. They'll see leadership. And then the principal has to then say, "All right. I've got these kids for six years or eight years or five years ..." Whatever they happen to be. Or four years. Whatever -- however their system works. Then they have to say, "Okay, what are we going to do as a group of teachers during that period of time?" I mean, we might get them from JK all the way to sixth. We get eight years with these kids. I mean, really think. What are we going to try and do with these kids? So what should we be doing in JK? What should we be doing in grade ...? So you have to do that. And then the teacher in the classroom going through the curriculum and doing all the things that they do, has to think about what kind of community I'm creating, what are our values, what are we trying to do as a class? How do we think about ourselves? How do we think about each other? How do we think about what we're doing and how it relates to the outside world? So that you get this, sort of, cascade of leadership influences that then, kind of, translates -- because the kids learn most of this by osmosis. I mean, they really learn it by not knowing they're observing but they're observing. And they're seeing somebody who is doing more than just simply administering the tests, taking the attendance, you know? Making people stop talking to each other or whatever it happens to be. But they see a teacher who is building a community in their classroom with a set of values and ideas and so on. And then they translate. They just will translate. So if they're in a classroom which is about -- where this is about tolerance and acceptance and "We take care of the small, not the big." Or we take care of the big and the small, but we don't let small fall behind. And we don't stigmatize people. All kinds of things that could happen. This will -- this can translate. So you don't have to have a lecture on it. The people -- the kids who will be in leadership positions, whether it's on a project or on a team or in the choir or just doing pick-up soccer game at recess, will have picked up a set of values. And then they will translate those. And it'll become how they do things. And if they do that thing, I think they'll internalize the ideas of leadership.

But if you, kind of -- take you -- if you go down the other track and you say, no, you know? Think of yourselves and call yourselves administrators. I'm a principal, I'm an administrator. I'm a teacher, I'm the one who's there to keep order and make sure everyone has good marks on the standardized tests. And all that sort of thing. And I really get on the kids who are holding the class back. And I really give a lot of "atta boys!" to the people who are getting good marks. And the ones who are always on time, and the ones who are tidy, and da, da, da. And I do a whole set of things around that. The kids will -- that's what they'll take. That's what they'll pick up. They'll pick up. They'll pick up this idea of if you want to get people to do something, boss them around. That's what they'll see. This they'll see because that's how it's done. That's what their image is. Their image is that, "I want to get things done? Boss people around." Tell them what to do. Get on top of them. Follow up. That's what you'll do. But if they see something else, they will act differently.