

# PRIORITIZING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

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## **Finding Time for Instructional Leadership**

It's no wonder a site administrator's role leaves but a few minutes a year to think about instructional leadership. Between the angry parents, the broken (for the tenth time this month) copier, and the unexpected Fire Drill, the reason you went into administration often gets lost. However, it's important to remember you didn't become an administrator to be the best manager of Lunch Duty in the state. Rather, you chose this path because you wanted to impact the lives of students. You wanted to make positive changes.

## **Instructional Leadership is About Balance**

The Masbloom framework necessitates a continual balance between high expectations and social and emotional well-being. Similarly, a school leader must be a systems manager in tandem with strong instructional leadership.

Schools can continue to function, even if management is insufficient to prevent general disorder and chaos. But to thrive, schools need not only effective system management, they need instructional leadership.

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### **Instructional Leadership is Hard Work, but It’s the Right Work**

Instructional leadership must surpass the rubrics and check-off lists of the traditional teacher evaluation process, which is at best bureaucratic and at worst impedes teacher efficacy. We consistently remind our educators not to work as hard as the students. In the case of instructional leadership, the opposite is true. Ours is the business of teaching and learning, so it follows that competent instructional leaders must be grounded in solid pedagogical theory.

### **What do Teachers and Students Need?**

As you evolve towards a Prosperity-Based future, keep in mind the instructional leadership tips outlined below for your staff. You must be a learner alongside your staff on this journey and will need to approach this work with a Masbloom mindset as well: by holding high expectations for your teachers while providing support and empathy. When you adopt this learner mentality, your students will benefit.

### **Teachers Want Practical Strategies, not Binders!**

It’s unfortunate no educator entered the profession for the money, as we would have been better served buying stock in binders. Our garages are still full of dusty binders from trainings past, brimming with Power Point printouts and Two Truths and a Lie. But, like us, teachers don’t need another binder.

Teachers believe our many initiatives are important. But they also want to see what it looks like. Teachers want something to take away and use tomorrow with students. Our guides are designed specifically for that purpose: each session models research-based best practices and provides ready-to-go classroom activities. Your job is to highlight these strategies, discuss how they can be modified for students, and (most importantly) celebrate and reinforce when you see those changes occur in the classroom.

### **Teachers Need Support and Empathy**

We all became educators to change student lives. However, change is difficult. No one likes to feel like a novice in their chosen profession, especially one they've dedicated their hearts (and pocketbooks) to.

When transitioning to the CCSS a decade ago, I often showed a picture of Frankenstein to administrators as a reminder that we—the educational system—created our own monster. As a system, we spent fifteen years in the black hole of No Child Left Behind, holding our teachers and their pay hostage for test scores. It was no wonder that the subsequent transition to an era of critical thinking and problem solving was an adjustment for all educators.

As you progress through this year, remember to be a source of positivity for your colleagues, to demonstrate a projection of success just as we are asking them to demonstrate for their students. Transformation is hard work, and it can only be accomplished with your support and leadership.

